Kieron Gillen | **Caspar Wijngaard**
Clayton Cowles | Rian Hughes

Volume Two
MUTUALLY REASSURING DESTRUCTION

THE POWER FANTASY™

"There needs to be a heaven on earth.
For everyone."
—The Queen

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THE POWER FANTASY

Volume Two | **MUTUALLY REASSURING DESTRUCTION**

The Superpowers | circa 1999

Total Extranormal Population

Extranormal Humans aka “Atomics” or “The Nuclear Family”: 15-25 million

Pyramid “Magicians”: 30,000

Extradimensional Entities: 2

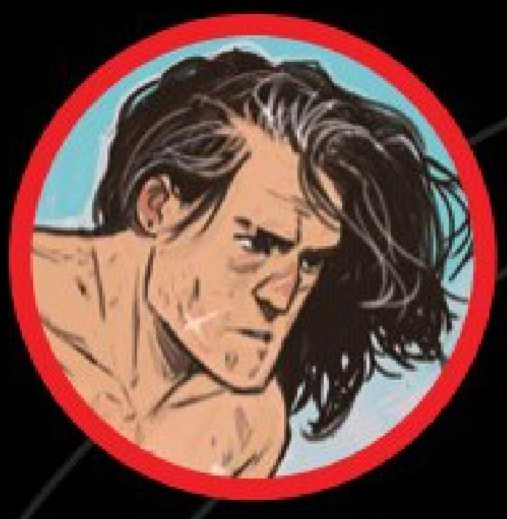
Santa Valentina
Was born with a fully developed intellect at the same moment as the first atomic test. Claims to be an angel, here to protect the timeline from annihilation.

Etienne Lux
An Apex Telepath (“Omnipath”). Firmly utilitarian. Physically vulnerable, but survives as if killed he will release a continent-destroying psychic shockwave.

Morishita Masumi
Mediocre artist hailed as brilliant by petrified critics, Morishita Masumi is a “dissociation kaiju”. If she gets too depressed, ***it*** *emerges. In 1981, Tokyo barely survived.*

Jacky Magus
Leader of the Pyramid, the planet’s primary magical organisation. Originally an anarchist punk, moved politically to the right in 1989, when the Pyramid was decimated.

Raymond “Heavy” Harris
Gravity-controlling revolutionary leader. Aging hippy, still radical. The world's foremost protector of Atomic rights.



Eliza Hellbound
Ex-Pyramid member, sold her soul to save the world from “The Queen”, during the “Second Summer of Love”. Firmly religious, firmly mysterious.

Extradimensional Channelers (Magicians) 🟢
Atomics 🔴
Extra-dimensional Entities 🟡
Human 🔵

Kid Ignition
Heavy's Atomic firebrand son – and possible future Superpower. His existence is a secret to all of the other Superpowers.

Tonya
Minor Atomic and journalist embedded into Haven, Heavy’s Atomic commune.

Isabella
Masumi's lover and PA. Italian diaspora after the destruction of Europe. Repeatedly emotionally stabilised by Etienne.

The Major
American-aligned “Superpower”. Killed in 1981 by Heavy when Magus revealed he wasn’t nearly as powerful as he pretended to be.

Chapter Six | **THE KIDS IN AMERICA**

Since the arrival of Superpowers in 1945, the world has survived through decades of near misses – worst of all, the destruction of Europe in 1989. Most recently, the U.S.A. attempted to kill Atomic-liberationist Heavy. To prevent retaliation, Omnipath Etienne Lux killed the president and many others. A cascade of events leads to Jacky Magus offering to increase American power . . . if he is given a position of power.

...and that's why I, Jacky Magus, will be honored to serve America as Secretary of Magic.
LIVE

Valentina, are you watching the television?
Yeah...
...this *West Wing* show is going in **weird** directions.
Okay. We need to make sure Eliza is cool with us and not cool with this.
I concur...
...but first, we should check in on Heavy.
He could be **en route** to Washington as we speak...

"...or some similar idiocy."
Heavy! There's something pressing we need to talk about.
Sure...
...but give me half an hour.
Got biz.
Etienne?
Yeah. He can't see inside Haven properly. The singularity messes with him...
Sure, he could kill people... but he'd be shooting blind.
So... last chance, Tonya.
If you're in, this is your last look at the outside world for...a month? Maybe two?
I'm a journalist.
I could never resist a mystery.

Family time!
Seal the room!
What *is* this?
THNK
The Future.
Er... sorry, Dad.
VVRRMMMMMMM

We weren't expecting visitors.
DEMON
Just use a fucking condom.
Tonya, meet--*sigh*--Kid Ignition.
Dad's secret asshole, certified pussy magnet, and the world's next Superpower.

You're my chief of staff? Shiny four stars. Brand new, right? Congrats on the promotion, I guess.
And now...
...let's hustle.
We've got a deadline to--
A question.
How can we be sure this will work better than the orbital weapon did against Harris?
For a start?
I shoot straighter than your dead predecessors did, mate.

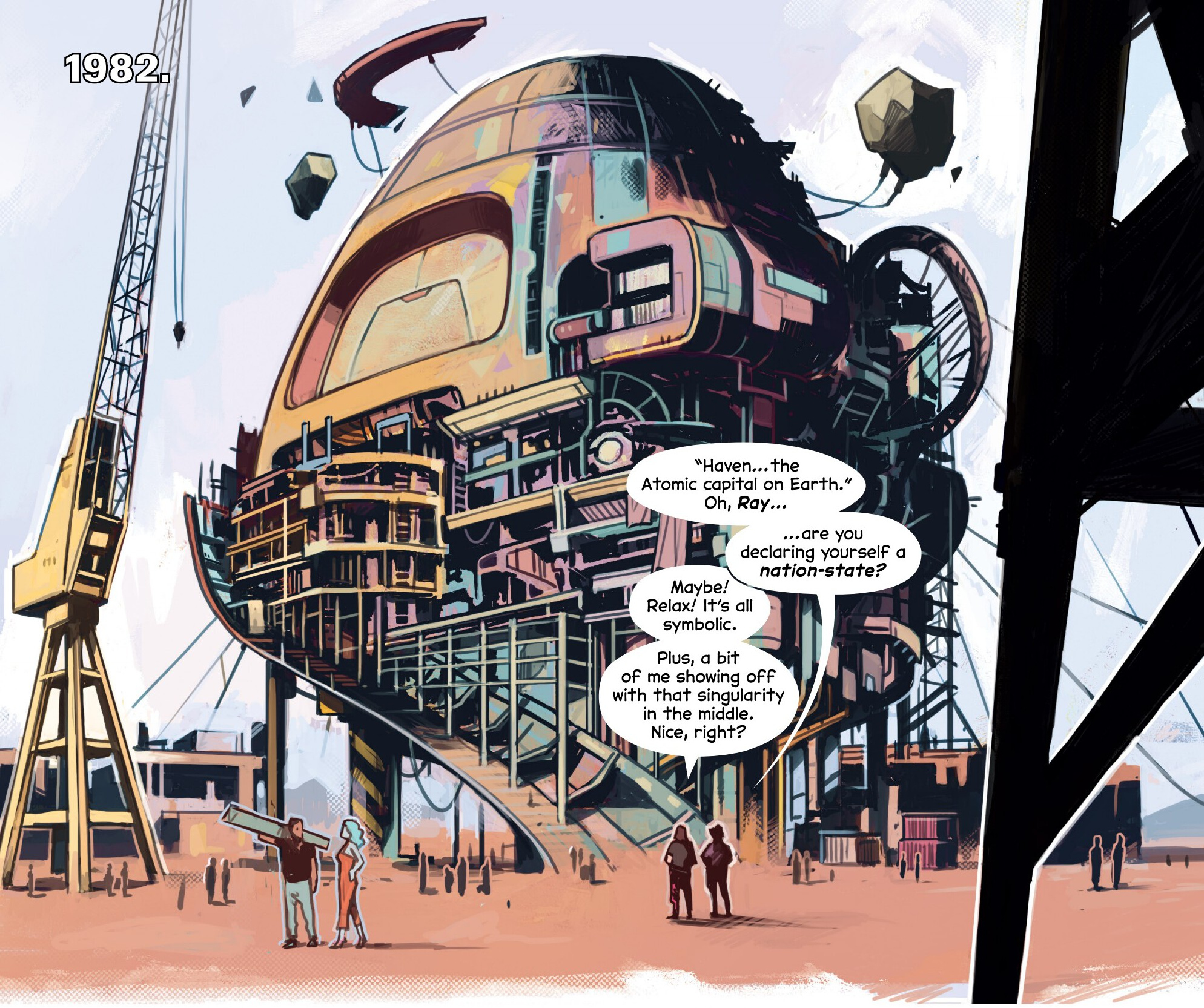
Now--assuming I actually had anything to do with those ***highly deniable*** inverted-pyramid renegades...
It was ***meant*** as a security blanket to make you think you could do something...
...not be ***Fired,*** because the dirty hippie and his big balloon scared you with his loose sexual morals and split ends...
...but the gun was the gun and I'm ***me.***
I'm a goddamn Superpower, and if we set up properly, you'll never be scared of Heavy ever again.
But...let's get on the same page: don't let my demeanour throw you. Sure, I'm a weirdo who's read too many books.
But beloved WW2 hero General Georgy-boy Patton did, too, and believed in as much mystical shit as me.
We're on the same side. I've weighed up the options, and the U.S.A. is the best we have. The 20th century was the American century...***until*** Valentina was born.
If we do this right, we can make the 21st century American again.
What do you need, sir?
-ZRT
DEPAR
UNITED STA
Whatever I tell you. You've got a lot to catch up with.
Because the Pyramid...

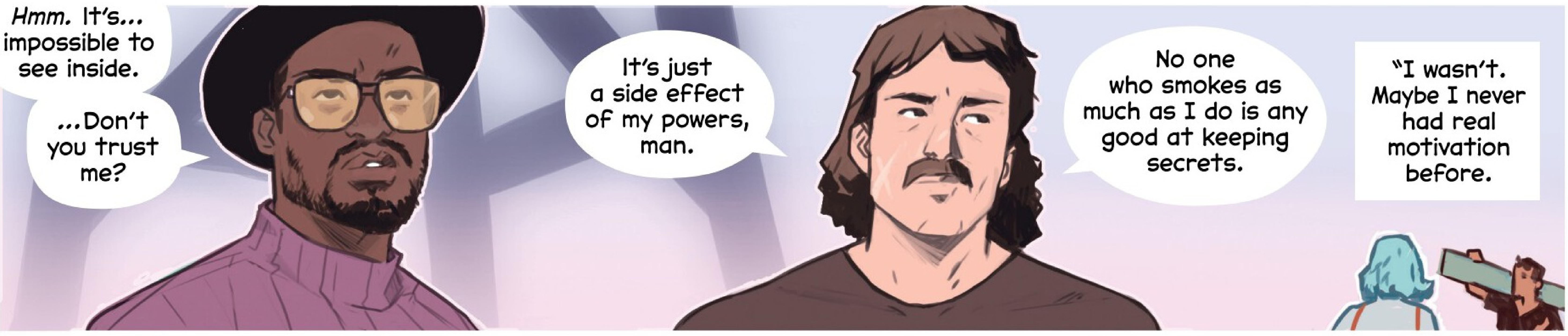
"...is already in motion."
Masumi, come see!
TOKYO.
謝
SORRY
Magus thinks I'm *this* vain and narcissistic?
Oh god, I hate that he may be right.

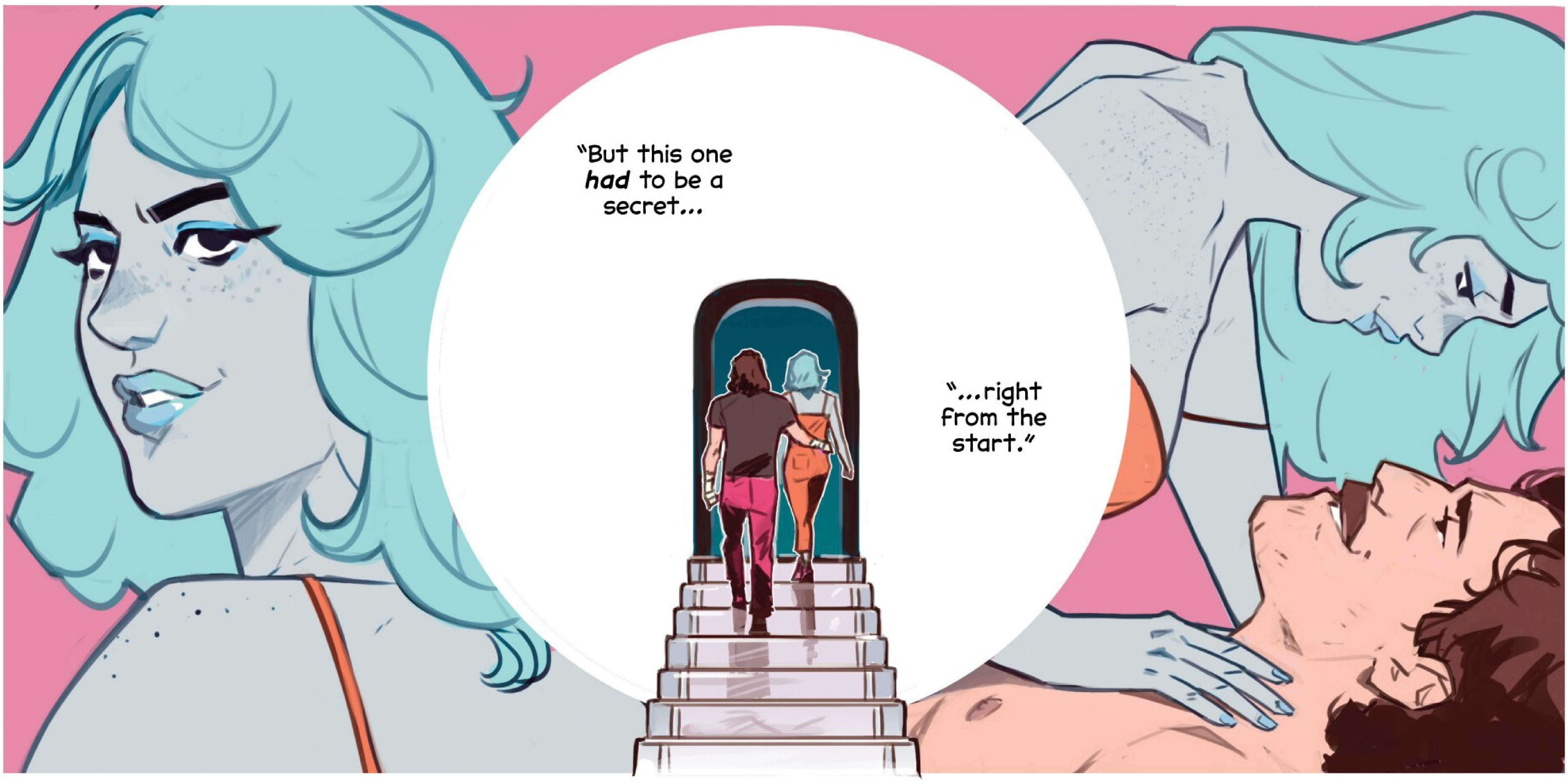
Do *you* think I'm narcissistic?
You're an artist. Of course you are.
Yes, you're insecure...but that you think what's in your head is worth sharing shows *deep* narcissism.
Wow! Like... *wow!*
OUCH!
...But you're right. I've been thinking, after the exhibition. Like, I've only worked *looking down* at the chaos. I want to do work that...looks *up?* Looks *around?*
I need other people for that. I need...
Can we talk about the Second Summer of Love?
...Later.
With drinks...

"...I don't want to talk about family sober."
It was barely weeks after I killed Major Asshole...
An Atomic popped up in Mumbai, having a bad time...
"She was powerful, but burning up.
"We were trying to calm her down. Etienne said she had some kind of...precogniscience?
"I was about to ask what the fuck *that* meant, when she looked at me and..."
Your child will be a Superpower.
"Then she keeled over dead."
I believed her.

But Atomics aren't genetic, right?
Not as far as anyone knows. There's some weird patterns in their emergence, but fuck knows why.
Though... Magus hinted he knew the truth once, but you can never tell how much is just him being a smarmy fuck...
...but if it *was* true, I thought of what I did to the Major.
Only Masumi emerged as a Superpower. I grew from party tricks at 13 into the living singularity I am now...
So, if anyone knew early...
I knew this little asshole would be in danger...
Hell, you don't need to be a Superpower. ***Literally anyone*** could kill a kid.
I needed to keep it a secret.
To keep it ***all*** a secret...
So, it was lucky Daddy had a cult.


1982.
"Haven...the Atomic capital on Earth." Oh, ***Ray...***
...are you declaring yourself a ***nation-state?***
Maybe! Relax*!* It's all symbolic.
Plus, a bit of me showing off with that singularity in the middle. Nice, right?


Hmm. It's... impossible to see inside.
...Don't you trust me?
It's just a side effect of my powers, man.
No one who smokes as much as I do is any good at keeping secrets.
"I wasn't. Maybe I never had real motivation before.


"But this one ***had*** to be a secret...
"...right from the start."

Imagine growing up in the room you know your parents fucked in.
That's worse than being stuck in the fucking bubble.
But you're not stuck in there, right? Everyone *here* knows.
Yes--everyone here volunteered to be part of this. It takes a village.
Sure, this is *my* family...
"...but it's *the* Family, too.
"If we have *two* Superpowers, everything changes."

Hmm. Does it? If a nuclear arsenal can destroy the world, what does it matter if it's twice as big?
Think about the last week.
Imagine if they got me.
It wouldn't matter. We'd have ***another*** nuclear arsenal in place.
And that means it's less likely they'd have tried that dumb-ass plan at all.
This is...a lot. Thank you. This is a big story.
The biggest. In two months, you get to tell it, embedded reporter, and get a chance to convince the world to be chill.
Get acquainted. I'll be back.
Okay, Etienne. What's on your--
THE FUCK DID WHAT?!

I've got Heavy now, Valentina. We can all talk.
Yeah. And we're doing it as telepathy to keep your hiding place secret, man?
Actually, I'm in the outback.
I'm telling you, Heavy, as an olive branch. I know things are bad between us...but this is a far graver threat.
However... speaking of trust: Valentina, **did** you give Magus permission to try and take me in?
I said it wouldn't work. He said it didn't matter if it worked, it was about stopping the Americans trying something stupid and buying some credit.
I didn't know he was buying credit for...**this.**
See, this is what happens when you try to be sneaky, Val. It doesn't suit you.
You **should** have consequences. I'm living in orbit because of 1969. And...
Forget that. Let's cut to the chase...
...what is Magus **doing?**
"We need time...and so we're playing for it. Until we're established, they may try something. The goal is to make sure they **don't.**
"But we've no other choice..."

...because I know at least one of the Superpowers is growing in power.
Good news for us. I'm a ***very*** special boy. I'm the only one who can ***deliberately*** grow in power.
The more people in the Pyramid, the more powerful I am.
I want at least 100k initiates by year-end. 400k by the next.
Hmm. "Quantity has a quality of its own."
Hey, my man has read some books, *too!*
But yes--that's why we're different. The Atomics are atomic. They stand alone. My magicians stand together.
If reaching this critical mass is important--why are we doing this in public?
Because if we did it in secret, my overpowered peers ***would*** find out and ***would*** try something.
Like, there's problems, but less chance of the world just ending. Being alive is a major plus when solving problems.
For a start, we'll need to decontaminate everyone we recruit with a nice purging ritual to make sure Etienne hasn't left some sleeper shit in there.
...But the biggest problem is I've moved so fast I haven't been able to bring Eliza aboard.
Hmm. And she's especially important?

She's the only one who matters.
"The Pyramid's magic is Numinous. That means...you're a Christian, right?
"Okay. I'm White Magic. John Dee angelic shit. Valentina? White Magic, too.
"We are not great against each other. Like magnets. Kind of rebound.
"Eliza's power comes from...somewhere else. She's stronger than me and can *definitely* shut the Pyramid down...
"...if she wants to."
She has to not want to.
"Okay--it all comes down to the goth chick, right?"

OUTBACK
LEAF AND BEANS
OPEN
What's the play?
I would suggest Valentina goes and talks to her. Eliza's not stupid.
She knows I'll be trying to manipulate her...
...and putting aside her recent unfortunate dabbling, we all know that isn't Valentina's modus operandi.
Okay. I'm on it. What else?
I'm likely going to be too busy to be Masumi's guardian angel.
Heavy, can you...
She's an Atomic. She's always been under my protection.
Hey--begging a question. What are *you* doing, Etienne?
"Sneaky" may not suit *you*, Valentina...
...but it suits **me.**

TAKTAKTAK

```
12.11.1999: Nothing.

13.11.1999: Nothing.

14.11.1999: Nothing.

15.11.1999: Heavy has a kid who's a Superpower.
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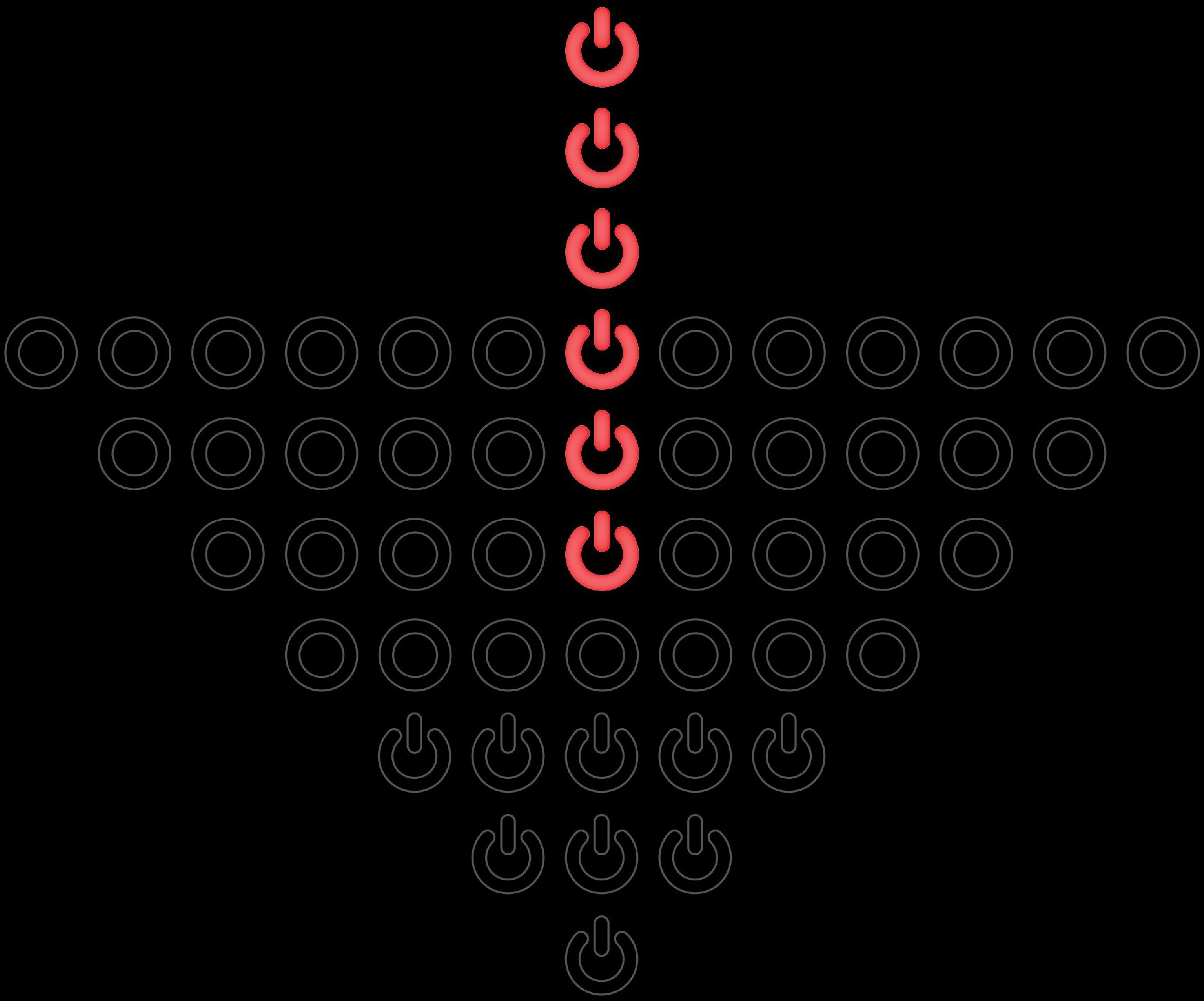


Chapter Seven | **THE SECOND SUMMER OF LOVE, part 1**

MANCHESTER, 1989.
Fuck my balls.
CHT CHT CHT
Okay, the headline is... more than the Signal. *Much* more.
Pyramid containment will collapse in minutes, and everyone north of Northampton gets cancer...
Hey! You're putting out too much energy.
Can you calm it down a bit and we can talk, *hmm?*
Can you help me?
Hopefully. I'd like to be friends.
What's the problem?

There needs to be a heaven on Earth.
For everyone.
Well, *that* sounds just swell.

MANCHESTER, 1999.
Eliza?
I'm here about Magus.
Let me in.
Very well.
Confess.
"I haven't done *anything* wrong..."

...no matter what any of those back-biting toe-rags say. And whatever happens, you need to know...
...the Pyramid are here for **you.**
But... you're working with the U.S. That's weird.
It is, ducky, but...it's the best option I have. The Pyramid needs to be bigger to do what I need to.
Imagine if something like the Queen comes again...
The Pyramid saved the world, because there were 250,000 of us. There's not even 30,000 now.
Plus...**we're** the creative ones. We're the ones who **can make something new,** because that's what magic is, luv.
Etienne talked you down in 1982, but if I work hard enough, maybe there's a way to make you saf--
Huh?

What the shitting fuck?
Our satellite is gone.
Heh.
Magic or not, a guy selling you tech having tech problems isn't exactly convincing.
I can barely understand what he says with that accent. Still...he's got a point. He saved the world when no one else could.
...I was asleep through the whole thing.
Oh! Sorry! I wasn't hinting! I swear I wasn't!
No, fuck it. I've been putting it off...
...let me tell you about the Second Summer of Love.
"Eliza...don't make me go through it all *again*..."

You know what I did and didn't.
Just let me in.
This is a *lenient* penance for one of your failings.
If I made you say even a simple rosary for every death, how long would you be standing there?
The day of judgment would be here before you had made amends.
Yes. I know. But it doesn't change anything.
What do you expect to learn from wallowing like this?
Our sins are eternal. They sit in the past, untouchable, immutable, *done.*
But our perspective on those sins?
They change as we do.
What you did is of no interest. How you see them today?
That is everything.
They are done. *You* change.

I confess every day.
I hold what I've done in my hand, and turn it over and over, examining it in the light.
I consider it and what awaits me.
I approach God on my knees, having faith that I will be delivered.
I will be spared the fire eternal which I so clearly deserve.
For fuck's sake, Eliza.
I really don't think this is healthy.
There is nothing "healthy" about this fallen world.
My rituals are all that give it meaning. I am alone with God in the temple I sculpt from my sin.
You wish to join me in the dark awhile?
Confess.
...The truth is...

This is an unlawful gathering.
This is your final warning.
MAD
There is no room for those of violence in heaven.
Look! See the smallest part of where we're heading.
In heaven, there's only room for love.
"...I *liked* her."

"I think we all did, but I *really* did. However..."
We know fuck all about her.
She didn't come from upstairs or downstairs. She just *came.*
Cool it, Magus. "Second summer of love." She's speaking my language.
She's coming from the utopian side of the movement but...maybe it's time for utopia?
I like her!
Etienne. What do you think?
I think if we have a chance to kill her, we should, as we have no idea what she'll do next.
But there is a significant "if" in that statement.
How powerful is she?
Here's my latest working...
She's in my league.

She just wants people to be happy.
Is that so bad?
Could be. People keep on joining her hippy-dippy cult.
Mind control?
Not that I can see. It just feels nice there. Even without the new drugs and the sex and the music and everything, it's just *nice.*
(I love the music.)
Don't discount the drugs. They're all really fucking high.
People like getting really fucking high.
It's like... why *not* go towards the light?
Tell that to the little tiddlers heading towards an anglerfish.
No, I don't think so. It's not like that.
Her heart is in the right place.
Val! Come back, you dappy fuck! We have *no idea* where her heart is!
Her heart is in a *million cascading fragments!*
Her heart is a *fucking labyrinth* and-- wake-up call, luv-- we're going to find a fucking Minotaur.
"I guess that's my sin. Pride? Too much empathy? Stubbornness?
"But I got close to her...

"...and it was just wonderful.
"She was turning Manchester into a city of love, house by house, street by street.
"I hadn't been at a festival since New Mexico, and this was like a dream of that, more so...
"They called her the Queen of their mad little town, but she was a servant. She just worked so hard to make everyone happy.
"I think I fell in love a little. I wished I had her freedom.
"But the longer I stared, the less I saw. There were no answers."
Who *are* you?
I am a residue and lost and a final hope and I--
It doesn't matter. Nothing matters.
Only *this* matters.
Angel girl, you know perfection exists.
We should all have it.
"Even now, that excites me. Even knowing where it went, it excites me...
"But I told Magus about it afterwards. He said..."
"It isn't anglerfish.
"This is butterflies flying towards the moon."
"Japan? Why Japan? I could be in Britain where it's all happening, and now I'm going to boring old *Japan...*"

You're going to Japan, and you'll be grateful.
Dress up warm.
I don't think it's cold in Japan.
I am an Italian mama and I know *everywhere* is cold.
And remember, Isabella...
This is a wonderful opportunity, mia bella.
Life is a wonderful opportunity. Seize it.
"And I never saw her again."
Wow.
...Fuck. No, that's a lie. She said *that* drunk at home years earlier, depressed over Papa cheating on her again.
I edit the memories to make something meaningful.
"In reality, I looked back and she was already gone."
Three days later, Europe was, too.
"I can't tell you how good it was.

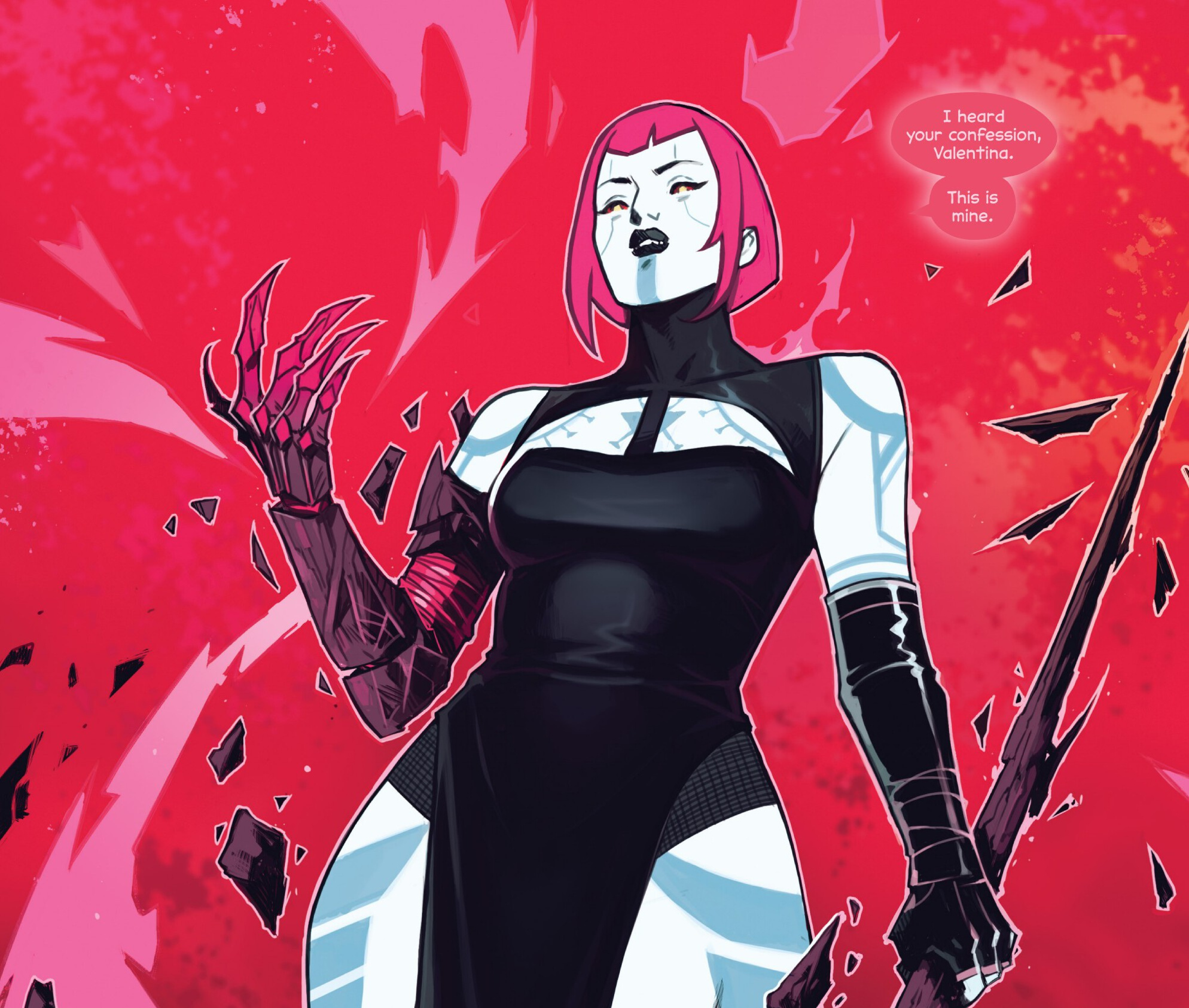
"I don't remember what Heaven was like, but this was... everything.
"Manchester was a city transformed. Its population tripled in two months as people rushed towards the party...
"The drugs that summoned ghosts of the future to your lips.
"Music seemed to merge our souls.
"Butterflies of pleasure rising up out of our skin.
"*Ecstasy.*
"One night, it reached a peak that I'd never imagined. I was so high.
"And then, she turned to me and..."
This is as good as it gets.
You did it.

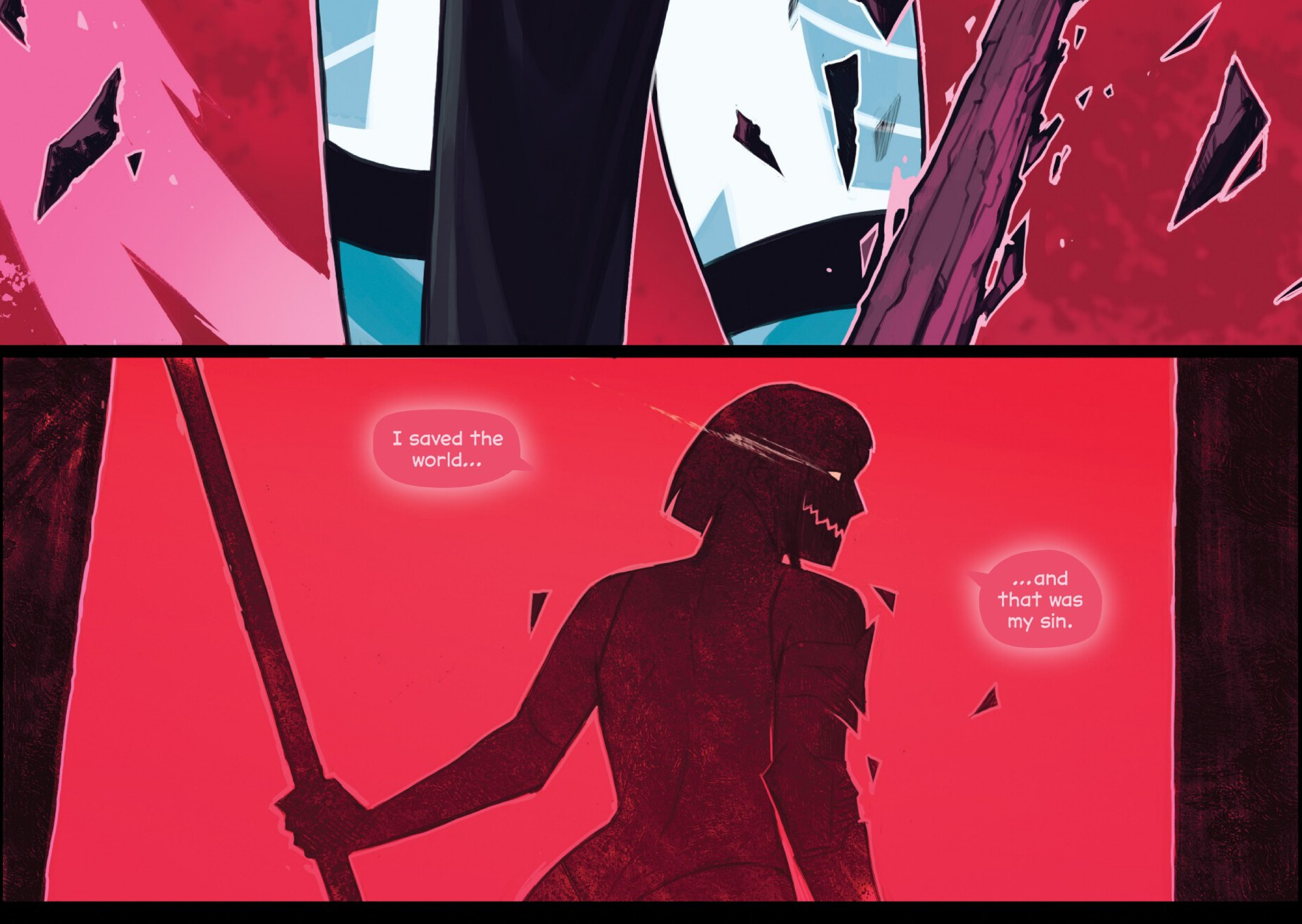
What's wrong?
It's not enough.
IT'S NOT EVEN CLOSE!
And then she started to tear reality apart.

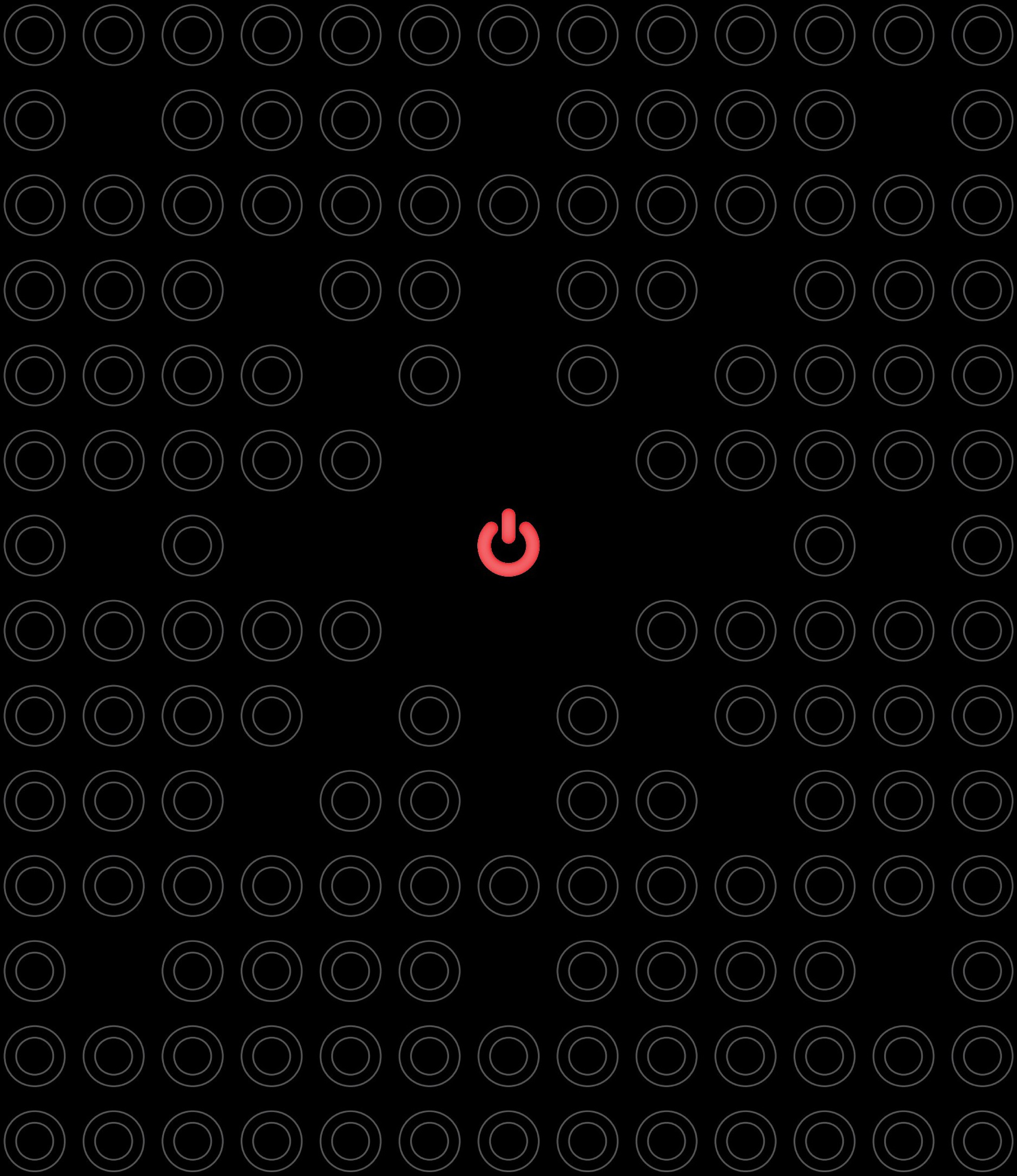
"We had crept off by ourselves. Monica heard there was a McDonald's.
"She'd barely eaten when we were in Japan, and she wasn't even one of the bulimics.
"She just didn't like the food. She had been subsisting off chocolate and bread.
"This **was** a wonderful opportunity, and **she** was wasting it. I wanted to murder her and then...
"Masumi. We're kids of the Atomic Age.
"...did you fantasise about what it would look like?"
I did. It wasn't just fantasies. I painted whole cities destroyed.
Feel shitty about that now.
It could be worse.
I wrote poetry.
I'd walk around imagining what it would look like when Valentina let rip or Heavy tore a continent free or...something else.
That burst of power, and then... nothing.
It would all be over before you knew.
"So part of me was glad...

"...I'd have hated to be facing the wrong way at the end of the world."

She wanted people to be happy, and she couldn't make them happy enough.
High standards will do that to you, I guess.
So, I fought her...
...and I couldn't stop her.
And then I did.
Eliza, I'm here because of Magus' bullshit, and rather than talking about whether you're cool with it or not, we're...
...doing this. *Again.*
And worst of all, I'm not sure if I've learned anything.
Yes. It's a good question. Do we ever learn anything? I do this time and time again, and I'm still uncertain.
But even if *you* have learned nothing, *I* know where your heart is today.
That is not nothing. Will *you* feel similarly?


I heard your confession, Valentina.
This is mine.


I saved the world...
...and that was my sin.



Chapter Eight | **THE SECOND SUMMER OF LOVE, part 2**

1976, NEW YORK STATE.
Aquinas argues *"God's majesty is infinite. Therefore, whoever sins mortally deserves infinite punishment."*
He dismisses God showing mercy to them as simply unjust--and God would never be unjust.
But consider: time and time again, we've studied the nature of God.
Omniscient, omnibenevolent, and omnipotent. Remember the middle one.
Yes, the damned may ***deserve*** eternal punishment, and if we defined God as "all-just" He'd be right to leave them to burn.
But He is not all-***just.*** He is all-***good.***
A true penitent soul will not burn.
God will save us all.
So, in conclusion*...*
*...*Thomas Aquinas can go fuck himself.

1999, MANCHESTER.
Eliza, honey, it's okay. We don't have to do this.
No, I have to do this. That's the whole point.
Now...
...bless me, Father, for I have sinned.
It's been one day since my last confession...
...and these are my sins.
Pride.

Above all else, pride.

1985, BRIXTON.
He's not going to pick me.
I just know it.
Eliza, I know you don't do "not worrying" but...*don't worry.*
You're good. You've never used your abilities to help yourself out. You work harder than anyone else...
...plus he's sweet on you. He'd have made a pass if it wasn't for you--
Being married to you.
I was gonna say "You being in his cult."
He's many things, but I don't *think* he's a hypocrite. Not like that, anyway.
He wasn't. At least then. But the idea of that crush was there, even before Dev voiced it. And...
...I didn't dislike it.
Yet more pride.

1986.
He's here! He's he--
For fuck's sake!
Calm down, will you? I'm not Father Christmas.
But-- surprise! I do come bearing gifts.
Basically, I've been on the pot long enough and it's time to curl one out.
I need five more to step up the pyramid and...
...well done, Dev. You're a Fucking Arsehole.
This suits you right to the tee.
THE FOO
Though if you use precognizance to win on the fucking horses again, you'll be right out.

Really? You don't even like him.
Nope. Tosser.
I don't have to tell you the one about rich men and the kingdom of heaven.
You don't trust me because I'm a Christian.
No, ducky. I'm fine with you being a Christian. Problem is, you actually believe it. Most don't.
If you were a hypocrite, you'd be in, like your wank stain of a hubby.
Or is it because you have a crush on me and you can't trust yourself?
Wow. Turns out you *are* a fucking arsehole.
Pride turned to wrath.
All beneath me.

If it helps, I'd have been pissed, too.
Though I don't have much experience at being turned down, I guess?
Yes. I hadn't either. I was something of a golden girl, so pride had bound me.
I treated Dev...poorly afterwards.
It stung. His lack of beliefs made him suitable while my surfeit made me not.
We separated. My pride could see no other way.
"And, for all his many flaws, **he** fought for us."
Eliza--
No. He doesn't trust me.
You're with him, so you don't trust me either.

How can I be with someone who doesn't trust me?
There's nothing to it.
It's really simple.
"He told me all I needed to know..."
...I still feel humbled. This faithless man had faith in me... and I failed him.
Still. I knew how to fall...

"...I merely awaited my motivation."
1989, LONDON.
Jacky... understood, boss.
What now?
The Queen is drilling a hole to hell. She's going to collapse everything into it. No more reality. No more anything.
Magus and the F.A.'s are going to seal the hole.
That won't work. You can't do it from this side. The hole is already stretching down the timeline. You'd have to--
No.
We'll be in a bubble of time in there when we do the work. It'll eventually fail and we'll just be *gone.*
It'll be quick. It's not like we're selling our souls.
You? You're going to sacrifice yourself?

Yeah. I *did* think I was an arsehole. Turns out I'm a hero. Who'd have thought it? Not Dad, that's for sure.
Wha--
Etienne is not going to be looking now.
I'm sorry. Kids. We should have. I was scared.
...I was more scared of that than now.
"This clown of a man, stood there at the end of the world, speaking to his statue of a wife.
"What could I say?"
I...we probably could have done anal.
It's probably not a sin.
Now you tell me.
"He made me laugh. He made me want to make him laugh."
At the end of the world, we didn't stop being us, being that.
We stayed true to that, for as long as we could. We had eleven years, on and off, and then we had seconds...

"...and then he was gone.
"Not true teleportation--one needs Hell for that--but as fast as I'd ever seen.
"It was only afterwards I realized how. Magus had burned up some Pyramid acolytes. The first deaths of many.
"So I stood and waited for you to kill the Queen and for them to seal the hole...
"...and to see what would be left behind."
But I lost.
I still don't know why. Was my heart not in it?
I wish she *had* made a heaven. That was a beautiful goal. Etienne told me about his plans for world peace once...and I *liked* them.
...I want the *ends,* but not the *means.*
But it's not my job to make a better world. It's my job to make sure there *is* a world, and this one precious timeline stays sparkling.
Hell, *you* know what happens when angels start disobeying the rules.
I do. God's rules are God's rules.
One shouldn't dream to disobey them...

"...but you know, on that count, I failed to practice what I preach.
"And as I ran across London to betray everything I believed, I saw how many believed in you.
"They got on their knees. They made themselves as obvious as possible.
"They knew the more clearly you could see them, the easier it would be for you to save them..."
I was half a universe away, where the Queen left me...
"...I didn't see anything."

"The simple lesson Dev had taught me was Hell is a source of power. One could have access to it, if it has access to you.
"A place churning forever out of time craves the novelty of a subjective experience of linearity.
"It's a simple exchange.
"So the theory was Jacky's.
"The ritual was my own.

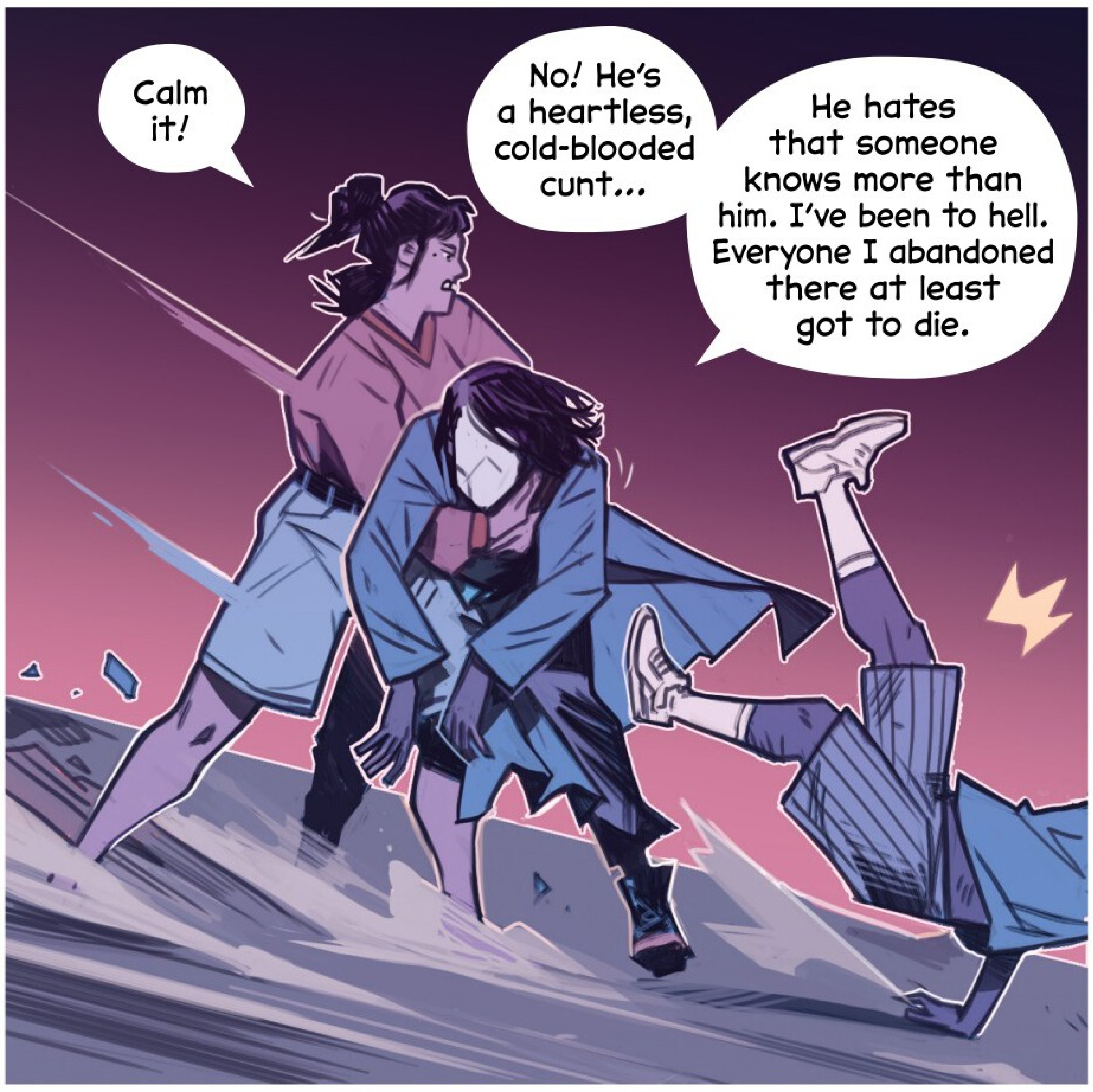
"I turned my back on God...
"...knowing God will never turn his back on me.

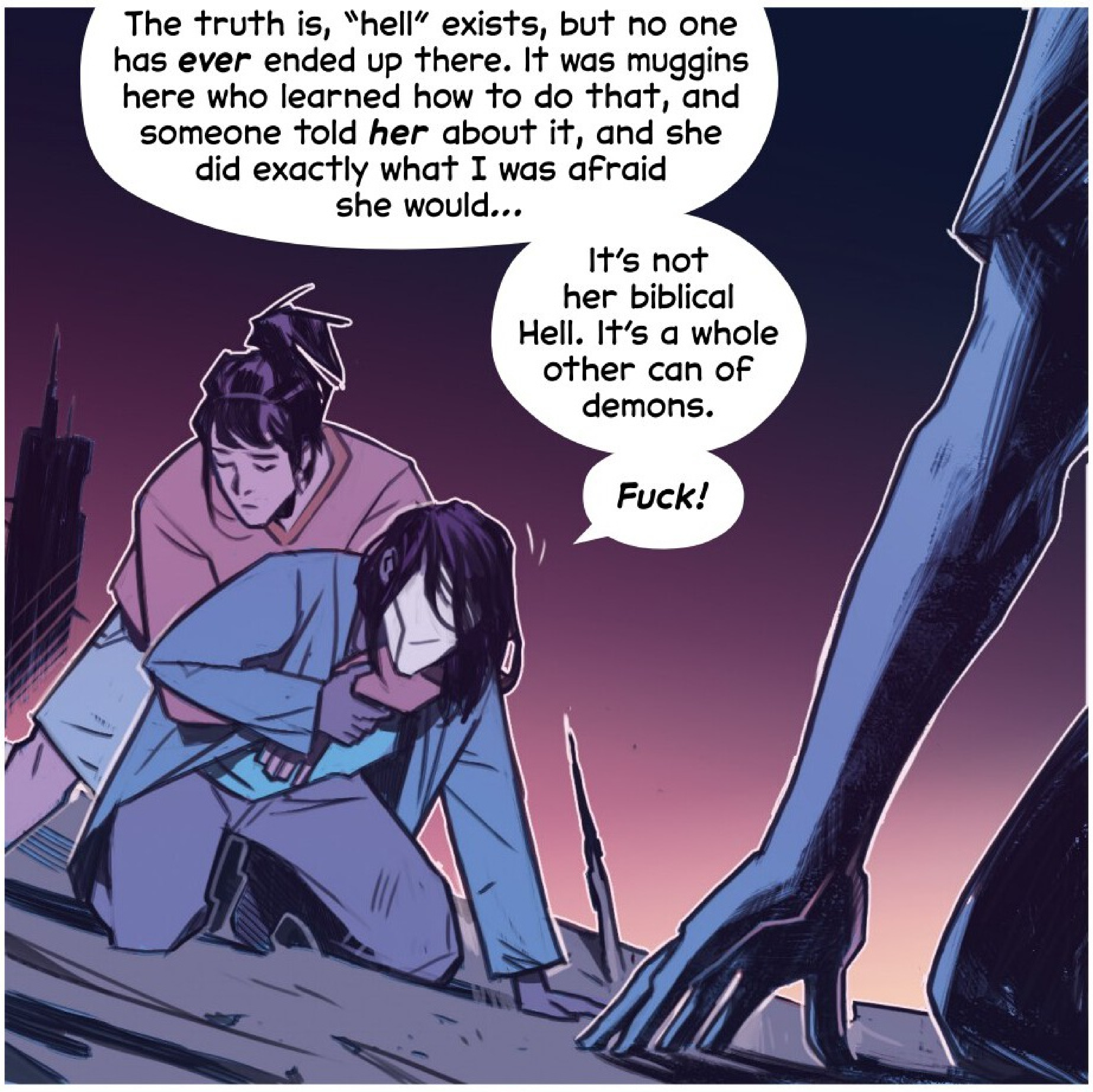
"I imagined Dev and Jacky and the rest descending into Hell, trying to close the rupture.
"Impossible, as long as the Queen was tearing...
"...someone had to stop the Queen.
" I knew I could do it...
"Pride.

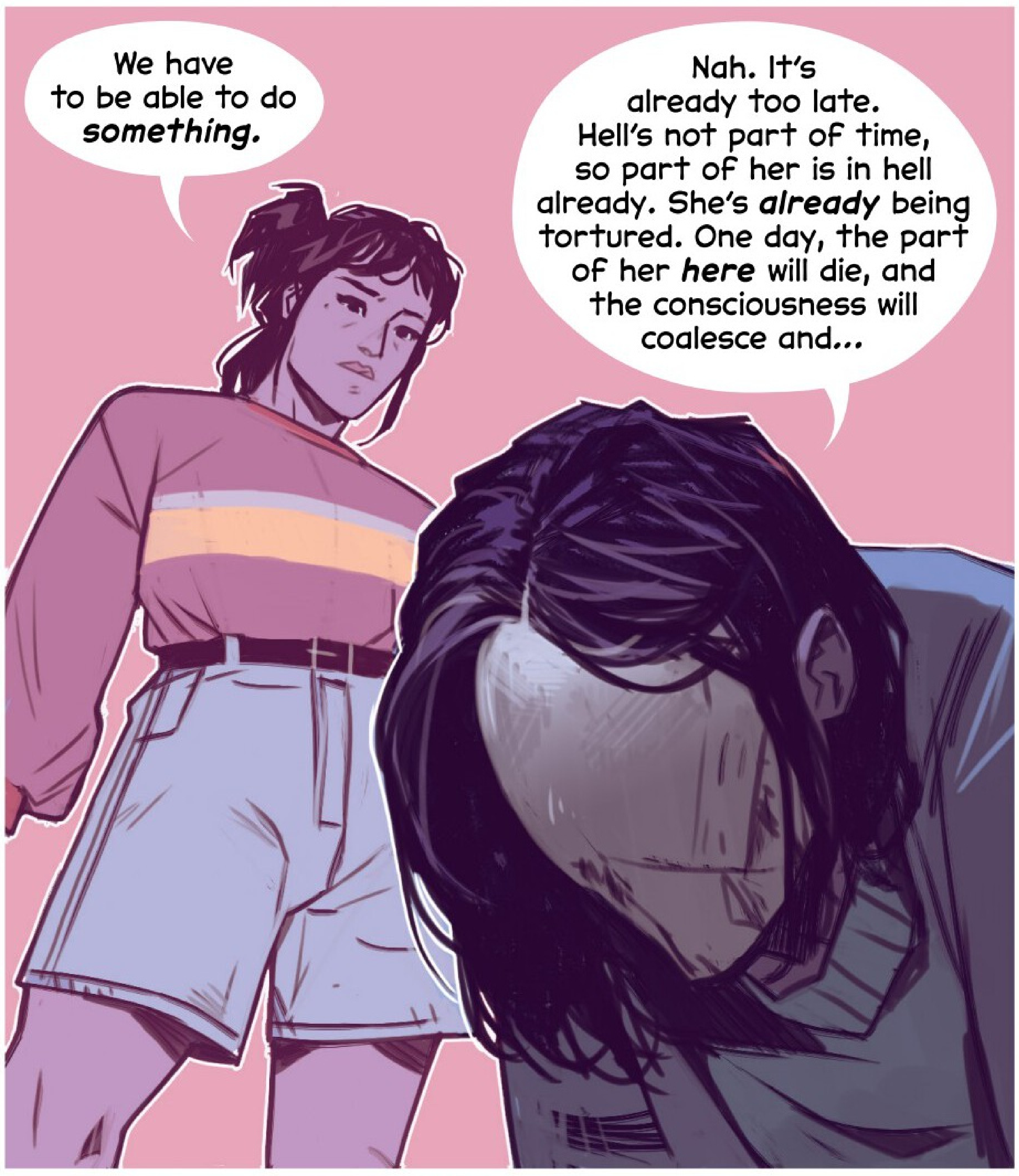
"I came to her in the heart of the storm, where atoms were teased apart like confetti.
"We considered one another.
"We touched...

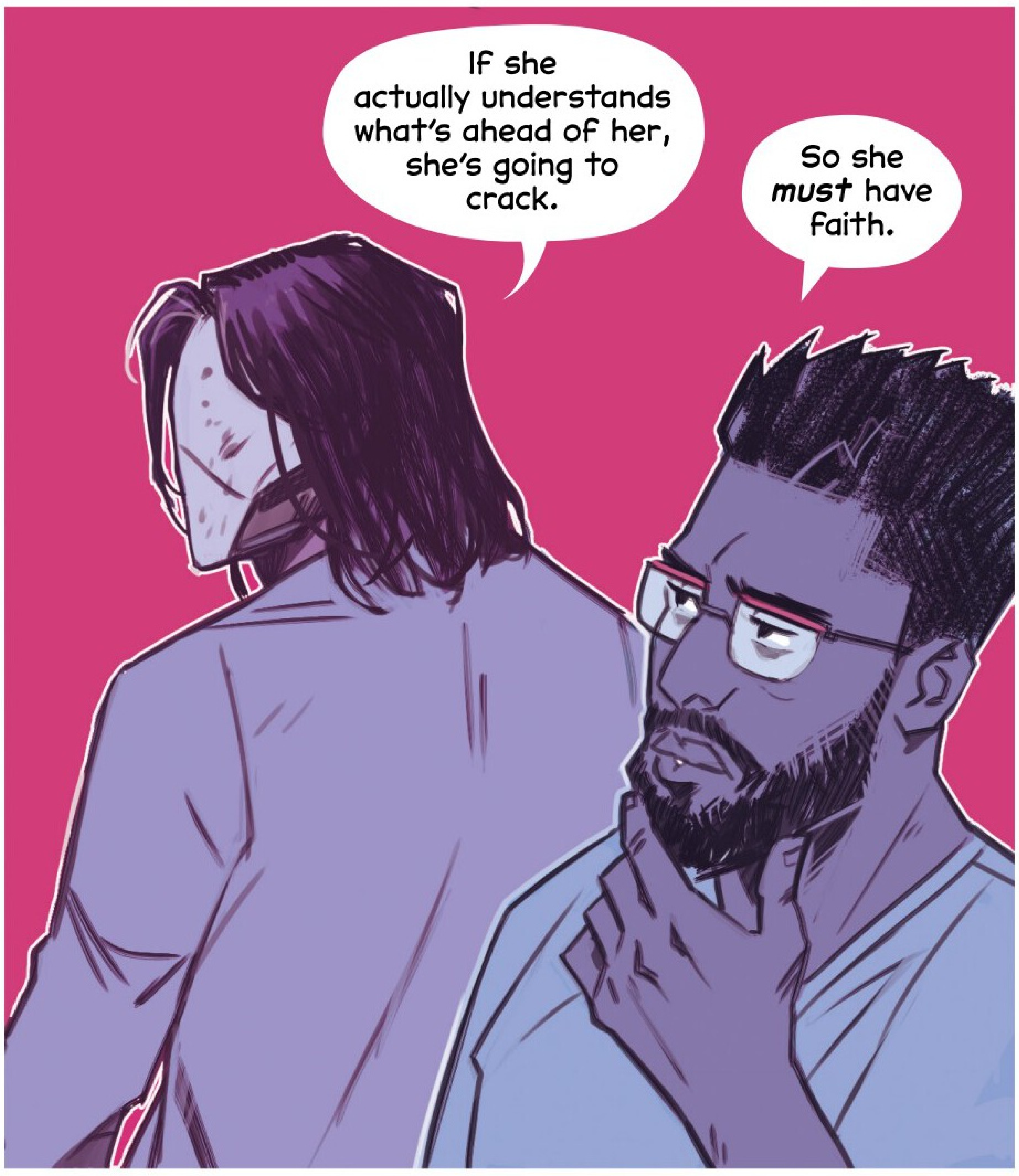
...and Europe was gone.
Soon, so was she.
I remember her thanking me. It felt awful.
I remember being glad.
Glad that I could *still* feel pity. The Christian girl was there. I was not just a creature of Hell.
See, God: once more, pride...
I *should* have had faith all would be well. Instead, my faith that *I* would be saved made me leap into Hell.
The arrogance. The *pride.*
Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In His name, my God, have mercy.
Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.
"I just don't see the problem..."

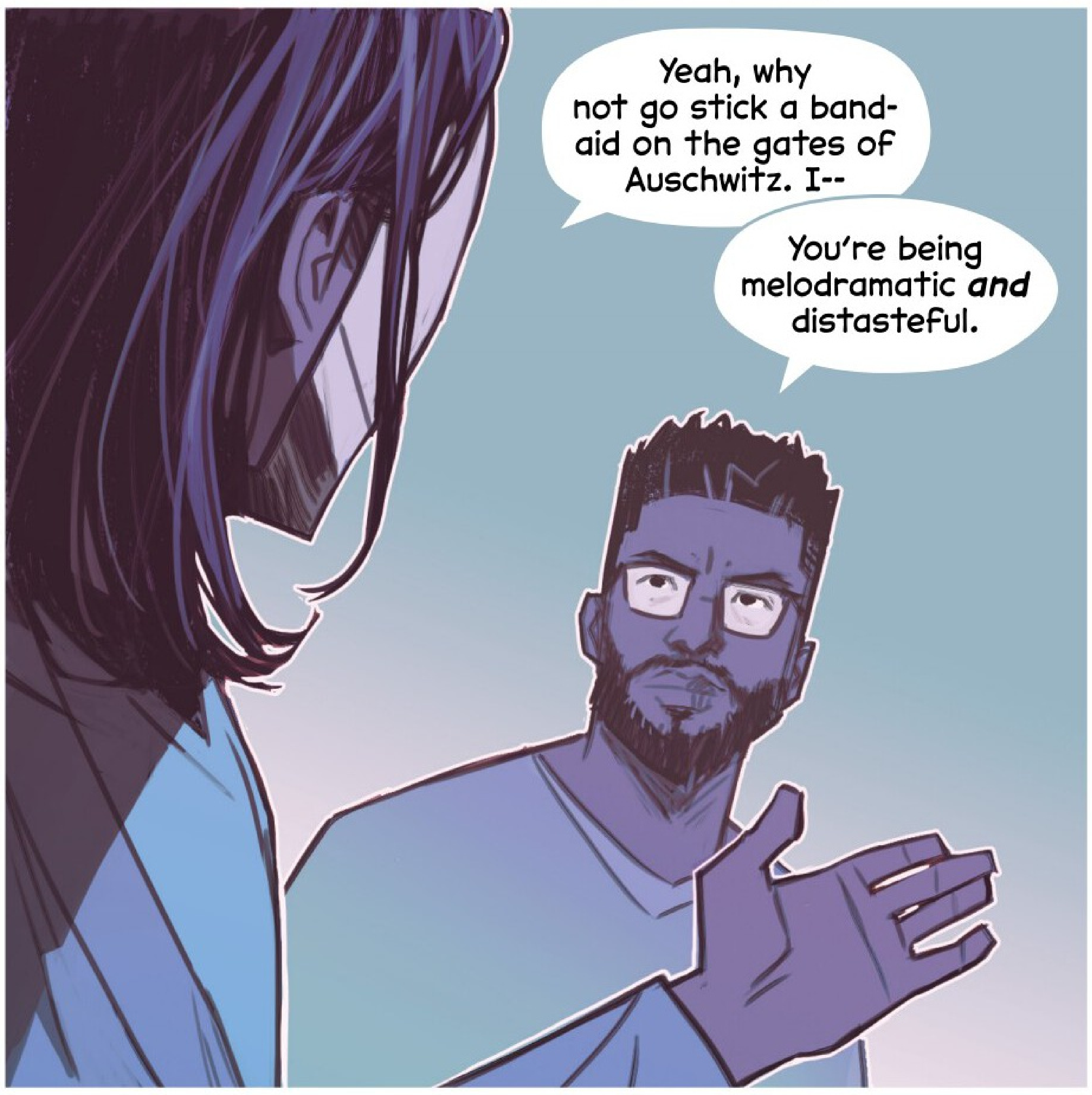
1989, 1 WEEK AFTER THE SECOND SUMMER OF LOVE.
One life for the world. This is Utilitarianism 101.
Wake up. You're a materialist in a world that hasn't been that since 1945.
You're going to have to deal with metaphysics, and the concept of infinite, fucknuts.
You could go torture every single person on Earth for every single day of their whole life, and it'll still be less than what's waiting for that girl.
Infinitely less, because that's what infinite means, you asshole.
No. By definition, life happens inside time. Suffering and torture are concepts that only make sense in a temporal universe.
The metaphysical structure you posit is outside that. That means--

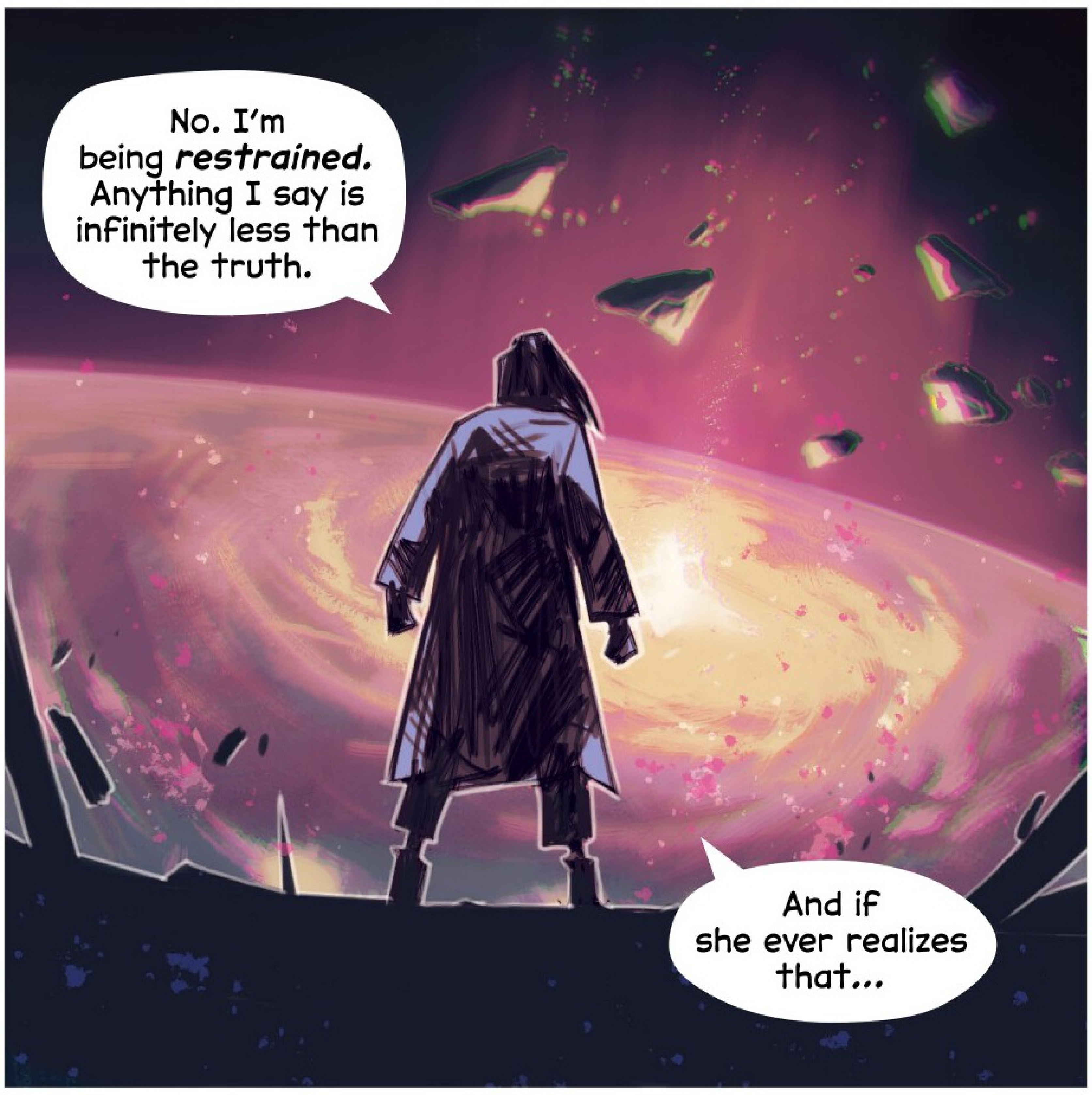

Calm it!
No! He's a heartless, cold-blooded cunt...
He hates that someone knows more than him. I've been to hell. Everyone I abandoned there at least got to die.


The truth is, "hell" exists, but no one has ***ever*** ended up there. It was muggins here who learned how to do that, and someone told ***her*** about it, and she did exactly what I was afraid she would...
It's not her biblical Hell. It's a whole other can of demons.
Fuck!


We have to be able to do ***something.***
Nah. It's already too late. Hell's not part of time, so part of her is in hell already. She's ***already*** being tortured. One day, the part of her ***here*** will die, and the consciousness will coalesce and...


If she actually understands what's ahead of her, she's going to crack.
So she ***must*** have faith.

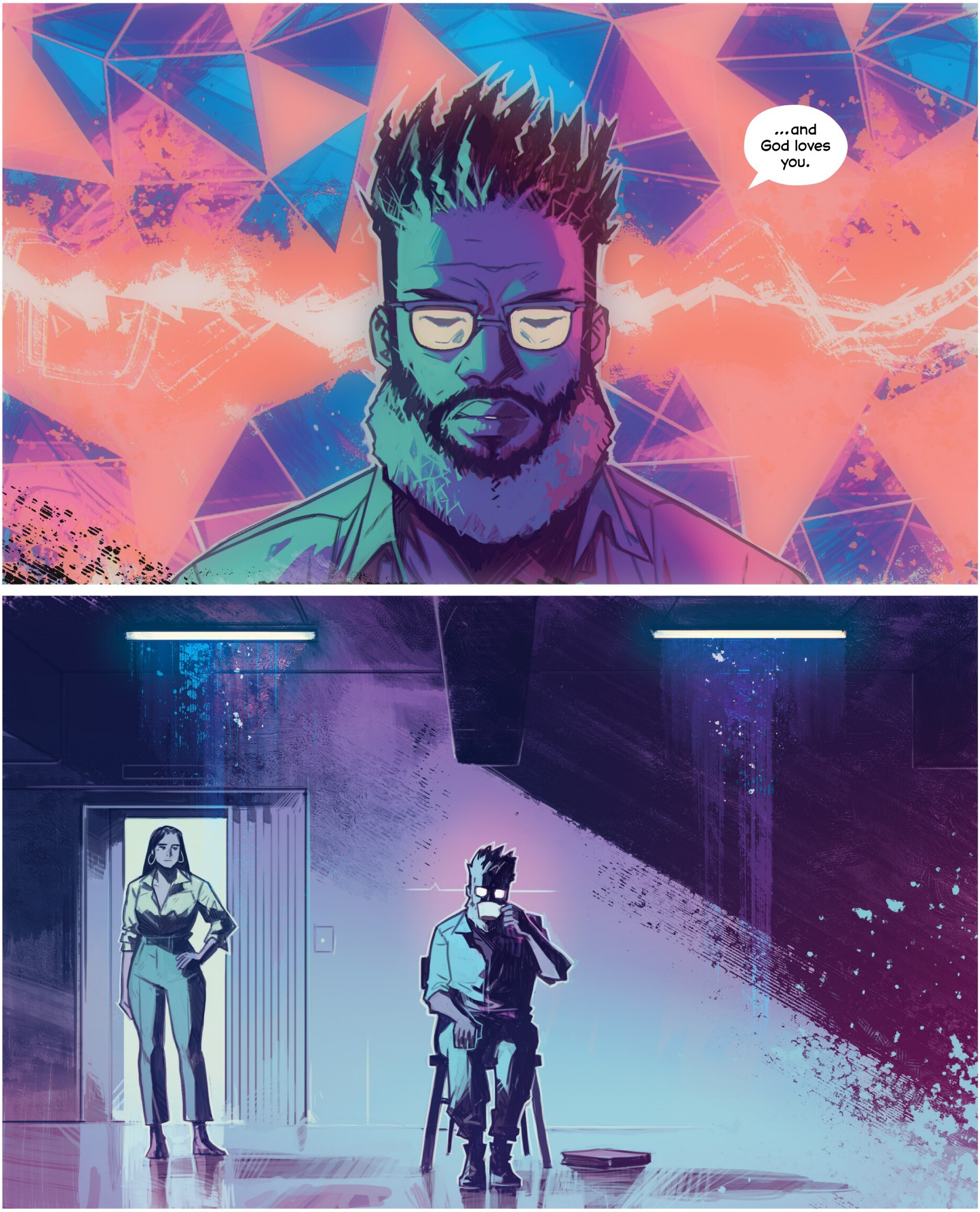

Yeah, why not go stick a band-aid on the gates of Auschwitz. I--
You're being melodramatic ***and*** distasteful.

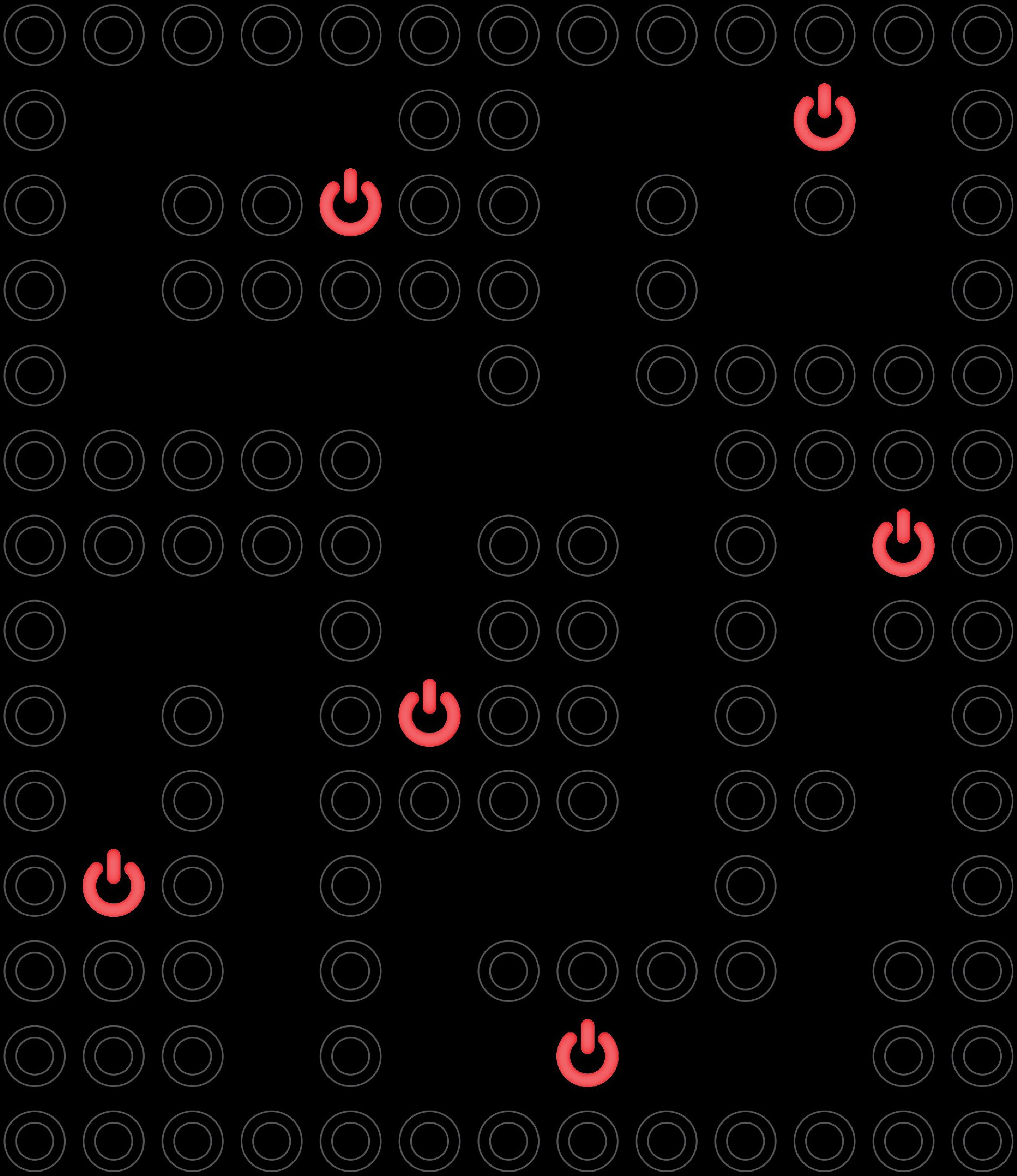

No. I'm being ***restrained.*** Anything I say is infinitely less than the truth.
And if she ever realizes that...

"...you can only guess what she could do."
Listening to that does make me see something you should think about...
If you *hadn't* done what you did? You'd have been burned up in the Pyramid, along with everyone else.
And that was *then.*
Magus has gotten worse. What could he do now?
You're the infernal power. You can neuter him, relatively safely.
All I need is you to be ready if it's needed--
Enough. I consult my conscience. Do you think you can order me, just because you're an angel?
Are you like Gabriel? A messenger from God?
It's not like that. I just have the mission.
I don't remember Heaven and your big guy doesn't speak to me.
Be envious then, angel.
I am closer to your God than you.
Well, pass along my hellos.

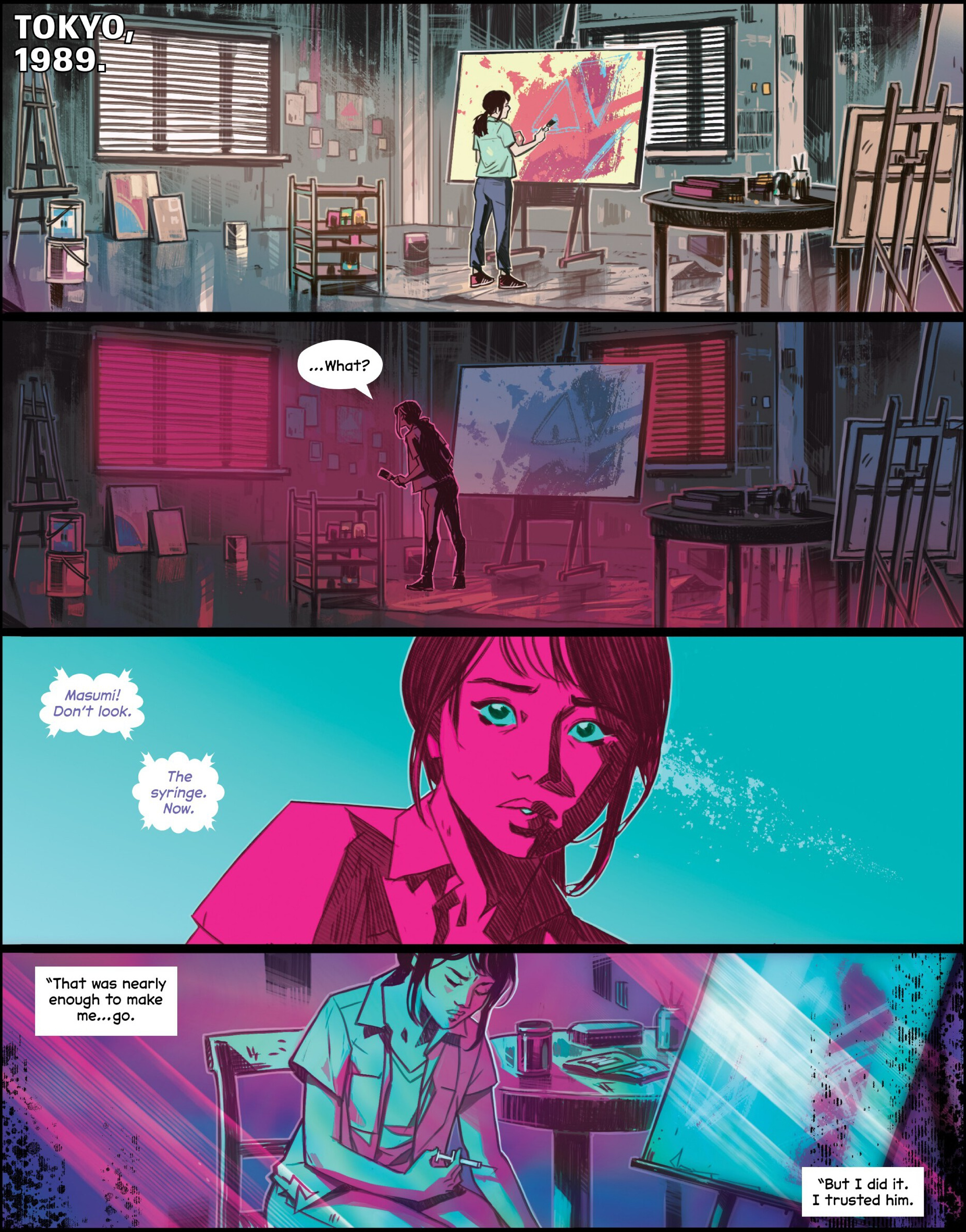
I am alone.
I am scared.
You are not alone.

God is with you...


...and God loves you.



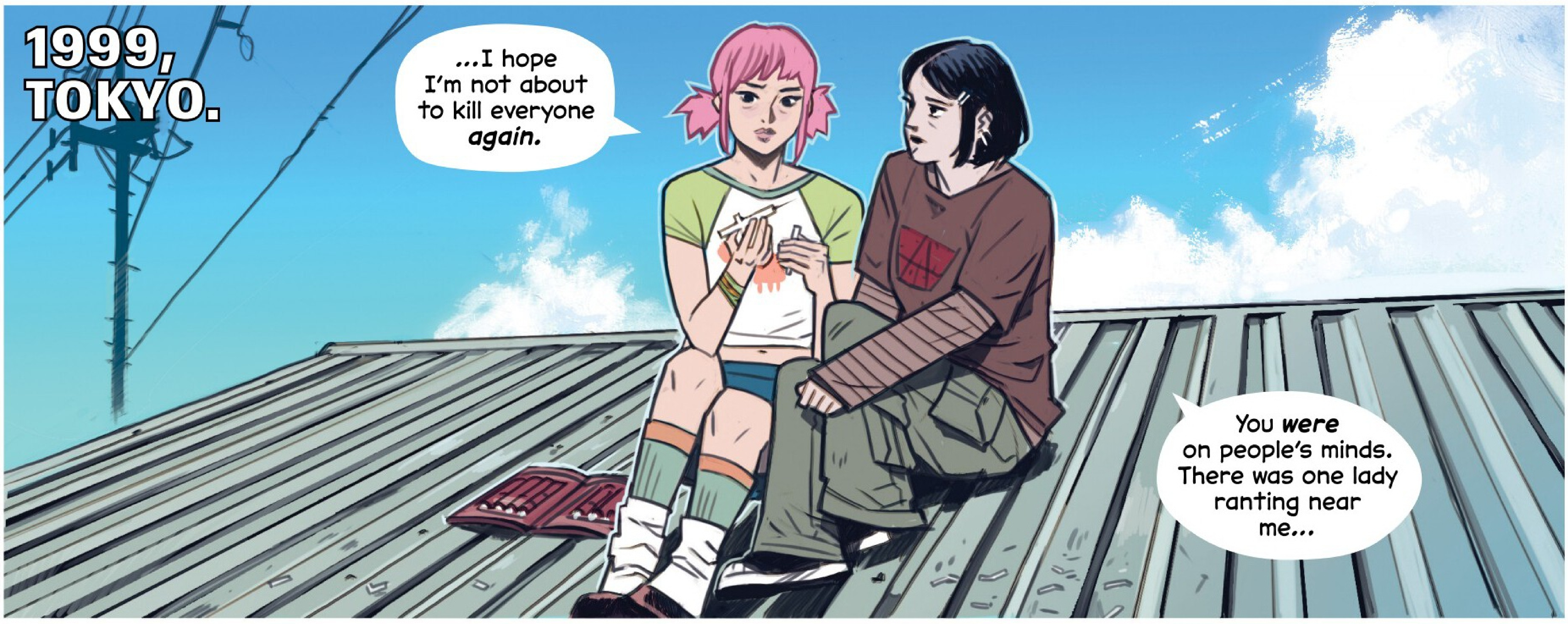
Chapter Nine | **THE SECOND SUMMER OF LOVE (Aftermath)**

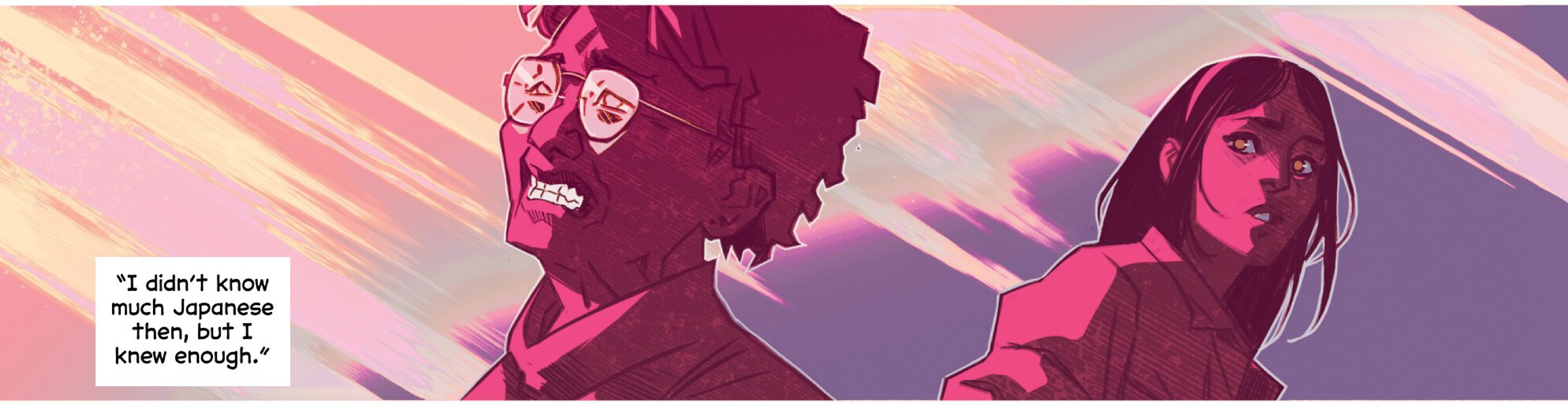

TOKYO, 1989.
...What?
Masumi! Don't look.
The syringe. Now.
"That was nearly enough to make me...go.
"But I did it. I trusted him.

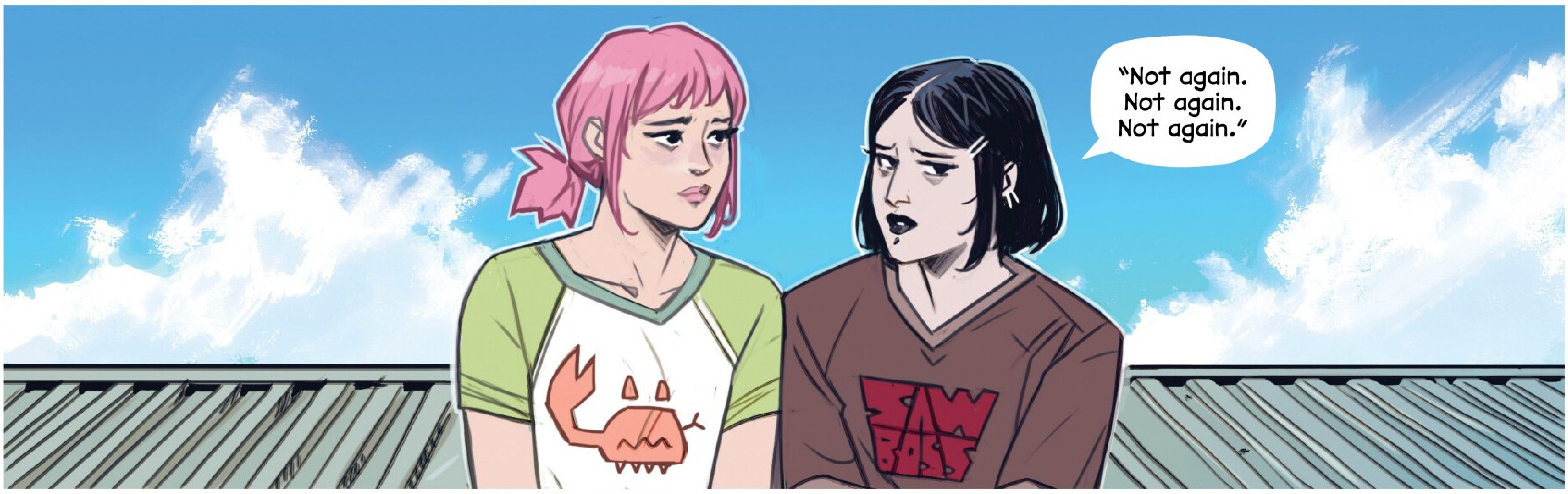
"It was a huge risk. They think maybe if I'm under too long or too deep...*it'll* come.

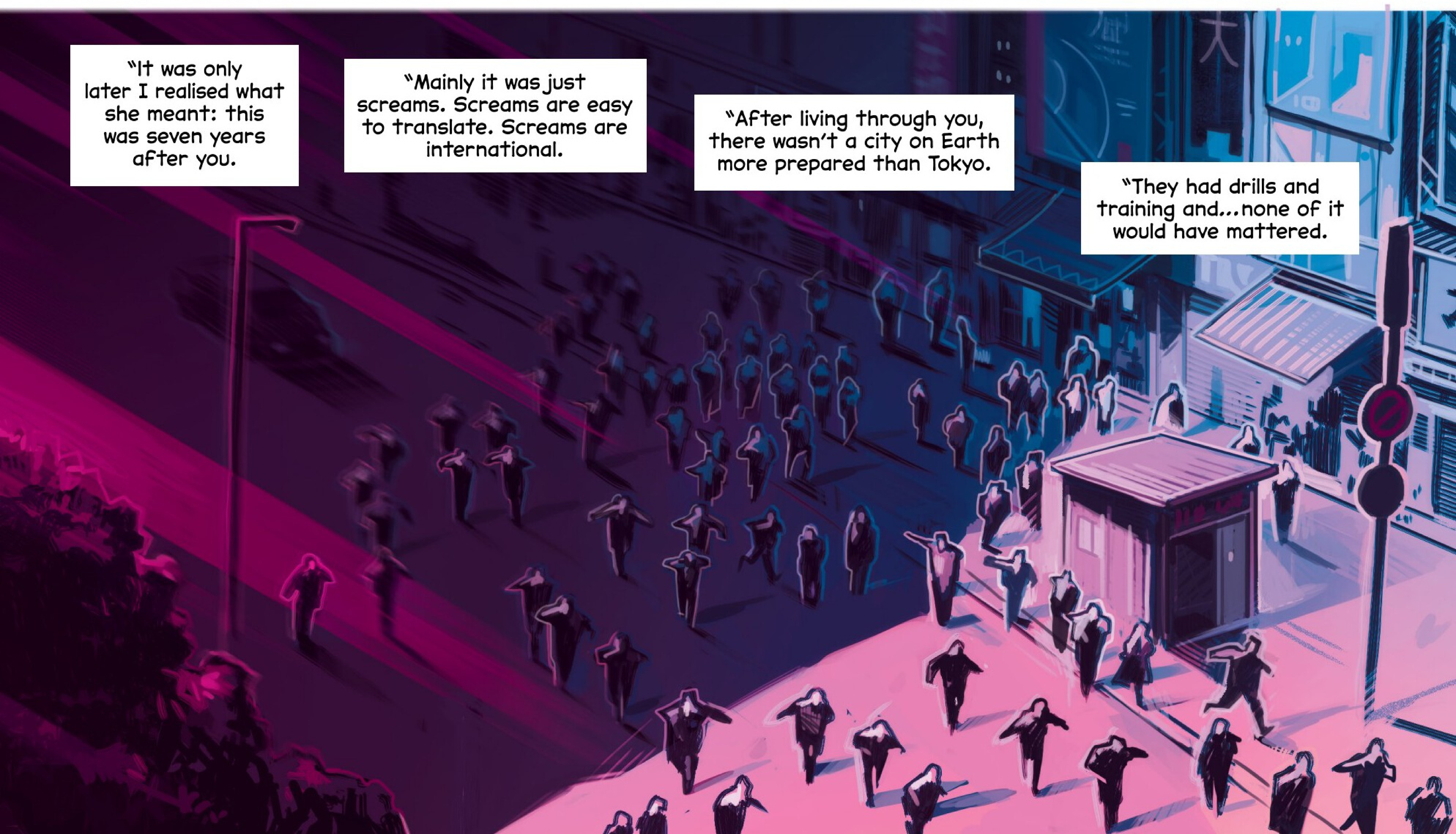
"If this was the less risky option, I knew it had to be bad.

"My last thought as I drifted away was..."


1999, TOKYO.
...I hope I'm not about to kill everyone *again.*
You *were* on people's minds. There was one lady ranting near me...


"I didn't know much Japanese then, but I knew enough."


"Not again. Not again. Not again."


"It was only later I realised what she meant: this was seven years after you.
"Mainly it was just screams. Screams are easy to translate. Screams are international.
"After living through you, there wasn't a city on Earth more prepared than Tokyo.
"They had drills and training and...none of it would have mattered.

"As a big chunk of Austria came at us.
"And just stopped."
Every time I see Heavy, no matter what he does, I think...
...he saved my life.
"This isn't exactly heroic..."

AUSTRALIA.
I'm still uncomfortable with you *literally* playing God.
Yes, I know.
That's because you're you and I'm me.
This isn't just our differing *philosophies*, but our *capacities.* In 1989, *you* could at least try and stop the Queen.
Heavy caught chunks of the continental shelf, squashed the tsunami.
All I did was remove Masumi from the table and turn off people's pain receptors.
I do what I do because if things ever get bad, it's too late for me to do *anything.*
I just get to be with those unlucky enough to not die instantly.
OUTBACK LEAF AND BEANS
I'm sorry.
Yes, I am, too, at least intellectually.
To begin with, emotionally limiting myself was trying to ensure I could make clean decisions.
Now, I know if I felt everything, it would undo me, and that just won't do.
If you'll excuse the self-pity, instead, I persist and the world does, too.
Yeah. World's turning, and I need to go watch. Magus will be making a move soon.
So...

...are you going to put on the big white beard and just tell Eliza to get in line?
No. To do so would be unethical and unsafe.
She can't suspect. If she looked hard enough, she'd see what I'm doing.
And, most fundamentally, I perpetuate this illusion to soothe her, not manipulate her.
Soothing her isn't manipulating her?
Touché.

In all seriousness, I consider Eliza's mental health a first-rank threat to the world's existence.
I fear in a long enough timeframe, any human with our level of power is Masumi.
To feel **anything** is a risk.
Yes, yes, Spock, I get it.
However, passions bring me to another topic.
Heavy has a child.
Good for him.
They're a Superpower.
Well, fuckitydo.
"Okay, **you** say he's a Superpower..."

IRST STRIKE
HAVEN.
...how do you *prove* it?
We're going to take him to Mars and blow it up.
You're going to--
Nah, sorry, just fucking with you.
You asshole.
Sorry, sorry. I know, bad habit.
Basically, we've done tests in the singularity to see how strong he is. It's definitely peaking.
To get the Superpower badge, we--
Kicked your fucking ass!
Christ, Kid.
The final test is Magus. He does his thing, and Valentina checks the working.

So the system would fall apart if she decides to lie?
If Valentina started lying, we're ***all*** fucked.
We get his Superpower paperwork signed, and then this little shit can go out into the world.
He's going from growing up in a literal bubble to the biggest stage in the whole world. Can he handle it? Can ***we?***
Don't let the fucking ridiculous pants confuse you. He knows right from wrong.
So...what if he disagrees with you on that?
Because he will.
THAK
TAK
CRAK
Let's make this more general. Not what you do between yourselves. What you do with people who ***aren't*** like you. For example, me. I'm here, and I'm here to work.
What happens if I write something you don't like?
He'd take you to Mars and blow you up!
TUFF
For fuck's sake, dude. Just fucking don't!
Loser!
It's like looking through time at a me who was co-parented by fucking MTV.

I've tried to teach him what I know--that power changes everything, in every interaction, as much as I hate that.
But it also shapes the world. Because that's what it's about. A better world. All parents want that for their kids. Me having kids is part of that for ***everyone***, not just Atomics.
GIANT ENEMY CRAB
Another leftist Superpower means a more leftist world.
The arc of justice bends any way you fucking bend it.
This is why Etienne and I don't get on. I want a world worth saving.
He doesn't get it, on any level. Fuck, he told me he hasn't cum since 1956.
He won't let himself be human. "Unethical for him to sleep with anyone."
Are you sure he's wrong?
...No, not really.
So, you'll call a meeting and hope that this Atomic prophet was right and Kid's a Superpower...
It's not as if I'm going in blind. He's tough.
We've got some psychics here. The boy's resistant.
The Major was resistant too, right?
The question is: ***how*** resistant?
"Welcome to the most secure place on Earth..."

THE PYRAMID.
...make yourself at home.
I'm going to power it up properly and make things super-duper-private.
If these aren't entirely secure, why am I wearing it 24/7?
Oh, they're good, but ***hypothetically*** one could punch through. Which is why they have the safety measure.
If they're actually compromised, they detonate.
Does Etienne know that?
Absolutely. Not much point if he doesn't.
He said-- "Yes, that seems wise."
I like that about him. He doesn't take things personally.
He's not an arsehole. He's just a cunt.
"It was the kindness that got me..."

We were looked after, short term. The world had a shock. We were in this together. Lucky, as we were a mess afterwards.
Monica got sunburn. I got frostbite.
A girl from class got one of those cancers which crawled out of her body, flew off, and then died…
…but that *was* short term. Long term, turns out we're not in this together. Maybe only some of us will make it.
…Even then, I was young enough to get sympathy. There was a Make-A-Wish thing. I got to go back to Europe…
"…at least the bit that Eliza took time to drop in Ethiopia.
"I imagined Mama saying, 'A good Catholic girl, this Eliza. Why didn't *you* teleport the Vatican?' and laughed.
"I lit a candle and…"
…fuck.
What's wrong?

Why do you think I'm telling you this?
Because I asked?
In part. But...
Please. Tell me.

Fuck it.
Eliza. Sorry it's been a while, luv.
Want to pop around for a cup of char?
"We need everyone, together..."

...to ascertain the truth about the boy.
Magus’s scan and your verification should let us--
Speak of the devil...
He’s up to something.
“Eliza has just arrived at the Pyramid.
“And he’s sealed it.”
With *maximum* security. Well, that’s not at all ominous.
Frustrating, but only fair. You’ve had your chance to pitch our case. He should, too. Though, of course...

"...one does wonder what they have to say."
On that day, the best part of a billion people dead. More from the collapse of the food chains. How many suicides? How much ongoing, fucked-up trauma?
You know the math? If you piled up the dead, it'd reach to the moon and back *forty times.*
Dead, dead, dead.
You lived.
All of *you* live.
So I'm telling you, because that's the only way I can be sure their story gets told.
Whatever happens, you're going to live.
Until you don't, then *no one* does.
"I cannot be touched!"

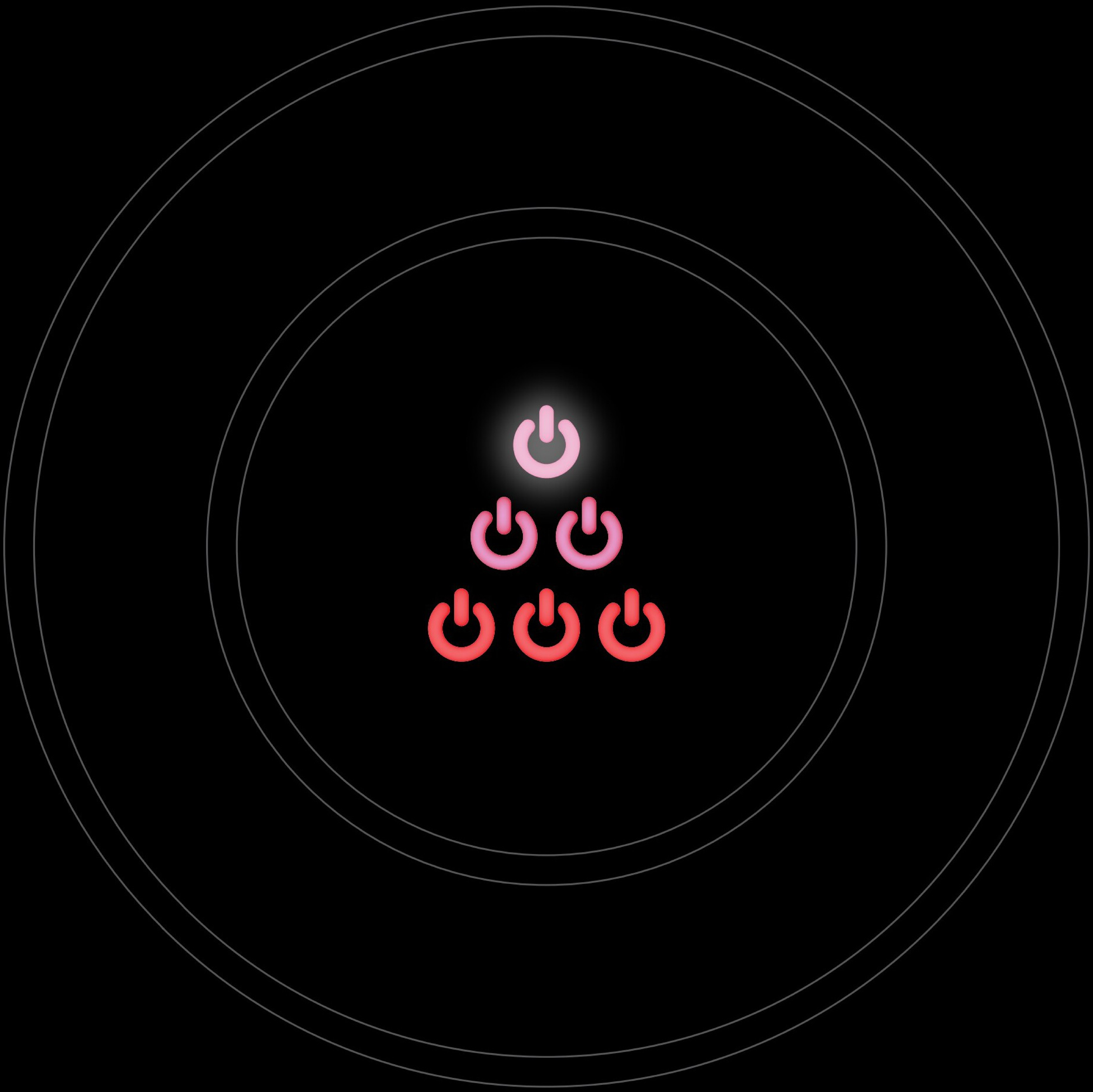
...I am beyond Etienne's puppetry, as is Valentina.
As long as we exist, we limit him.
You can't be sure!
He can *reach* your minds. If I power up, I'm a psychic blank. He can't touch me. Which means that your "locks" are less than mine.
But locks work until they don't and suddenly a thieving shit is inside. Do you want him squatting in your head?
Why do you think he's so bad?
Because I've met him!
Plus, Valentina told me. Back in the 1960s, he pitched conquering the world. "Make me king, it's the ethical thing to do."
She stopped him. Who knows what he has planned? And none of it can be good.
He can only make people *do* things. *I* can *make things.*
Make something to free me from Hell?

...You know I would if I could.
But... I don't know.
"I don't know."
Now, that is new.
But calumny and gossip isn't. You haven't liked each other, ever.
But I am more interested in what you told me...
You said to take you down if you took advantage of your status.
Why shouldn't I kill you now that you have Mammon's cock in your mouth?
You're right. I lied to you.
You're not going to forgive this...
...and it's a dumb thing to do, but it's all I've got.

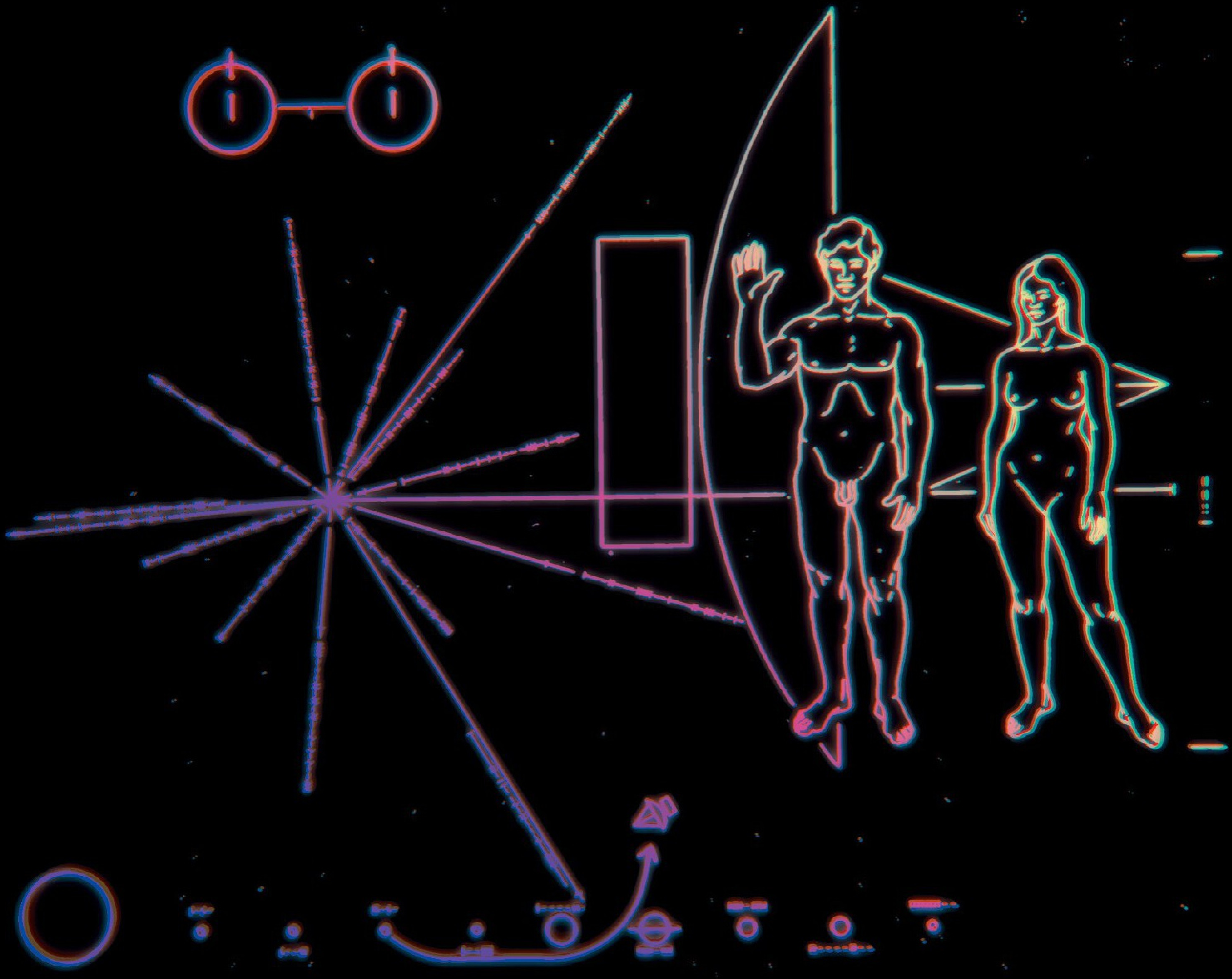
Wait. There may be a problem.
Masumi is distressed.
You hate me, don't you?
Sometimes, yes.
I love you, *Mia Bella*, but...
You should hate me.
Everyone should hate me.
We have a problem.
Get ready to--

Thank you.
"Thank you"?
For being brave enough to share.
Isabella told Masumi an unpalatable truth... but Masumi's okay.
Tell the truth and trust.
Score 1 for team morality.
You flip a coin and it turns up heads, it means nothing more than "you were lucky."
To flip a coin **at all** when the stakes are so high?
Truth is a luxury my ethics cannot afford.

Jacky Magus has been dead since 1989.
Dev.
I'm sorry, Eliza.
I'm so fucking sorry.



Chapter Ten | **THE SECOND SUMMER OF LOVE (Slight Return)**



In **1972** the *Pioneer 10* probe was launched. It included an etched plaque, showing the Earth's location and the iconic representation of its dominant species.

In **1978**, the Signal arrived.

He/She was millions of sentiences merged into one being of pure information.
His/Her home was gone. He/She had been projected into space, in hope of finding a new one.
Eventually, the Signal attempted to upload his/her consciousnesses into the population of China.

Jacky Magus killed it.

His/Her existence was proof that sentient life once existed outside of the Earth.

He/She was also proof that sentient life could become extinct.

CHINA, 1978.
It is... beautiful.
It is... transitory.
We want to live.
We want to live.
Signal dying.
Signal disrupting.
Can you help me? me? me? me? me? me?
Can you help me? me? me? me? me? me?
Yeah, mate.
Maybe I can.
Can you?

No.
Signal's disintegrating. Must have been desperate to throw themselves into the void, not knowing if there was anything to catch them...
We can't give them bodies except our own. I fear they're going to try and take them. Psychic colonialism. Unethical.
Hmm. Perhaps they'd justify it by saying they're saving a culture on a precipice...
Yeah, and one Jewish life is worth ten Arabs. Fuck that.
Knock off the hypotheticals. You don't believe it.
Yes, you're right. Playing devil's advocate is beneath me. Annihilating sentience for one's own benefit? Absolutely not.
Can you kill it?
It's pure information. That's my manor. Can't kill an idea, they say.
Never seen *me* work one over.
Let's hope it doesn't come to that. It could let itself fade away, recognise its time is over...
Lie back and think of England? It'd be nice. But nah, I don't think so.
A shame it's ending like this. Good idea, they just fucked up the execution...
Ah, you're studying it, too. It's like looking into the sun. It burns me with its incoherence...
All those beings, pressing together...

"...I wonder what it's like."
THE PYRAMID, 1999.
Will it hold?
For a while. I...
Why are you alive?
I...
No.
Later.

MANCHESTER, 1989.
COME ON, YOU BUNCH OF FUCKING ARSEHOLES!
DO YOU WANT TO LIVE FOREVER?
'Coz I gotta be honest...
...not an option.
No. I don't want to die. I don't want to--
You die a hero or you die crying when we suck the life from your body to power the shit we've got to do.
Your fucking call.

Angel Girl is fighting and bought us time.
We close the hole to hell while she finishes the Queen, and hope there's a planet left afterwards.
Come *on.*
Quit whining!
It's not like I want to die either.
OUT OF TIME.
Umbilical to reality holding? Thank fuck.
If we lose that, we can't leech time and we can't do anything. So, we're running at 1/60th...
...we're burning up 100 Pyramid members a second to stay down here. 6,000 a minute, subjective time. We've got 50 minutes, tops.
The sooner we seal the gap, the sooner we can--

Valentina is gone.
Okay. Etienne is useless. Heavy... fuck knows. Maybe, but probably not, and I can't see a planet left afterwards either way. Masumi? Maybe, but, again, no more planet...
Queen wins, no reality. Good guys win, no Earth.
We move assuming someone stops the Queen.
...I'm going to rip off the Signal.
It was a good idea. I'm going to do it properly and build it to last.
Wrap everyone who dies in a neat bundle and send them out there to find a new home, as long as it takes.
Do we have enough power to do it?
Yes. Need to save a few to close the hole here, but if we sacrifice enough, it *should* work.
I fucking hate "should." Let's--

Someone has sold their soul.
You told Eliza, right? You fucking **cock.** Did you do it just to save your marriage?
If you loved her, you wouldn't have. You fucking--
How do you know someone's sold their soul?
Because I know things, you absolute cu--

Eliza and the Queen are fighting. Crap.
The fight's not confined. Give me a read, someone...
We're losing at least Europe. Maybe Northern Africa. Asia. Maybe...
Maybe more. I can't tell how big it is.
Okay, a *minimum* of Europe to save. Etienne wouldn't even blink. I can't believe I'm agreeing with him, so...
I'm sorry, everyone. You're dead...
"...*Signal II is born.*
"Now, come on, Eliza. Show us what you can--"
Good work, girl. She killed the Queen. The Signal is picking up the dead... what's the damage?
Checking the readings... it's just Europe in the direct blast.
Tsunamis starting. Chunks of continental shelf are in orbit and...
Thank fuck. Just Europe.
...That's a sentence I just said. Wow.
A major plus of being dead is skipping the fucking therapy.
"The Pyramid for a chance for a billion? Worth it?
"Depends who else is out there and whether I did it right.
"So...how many of us are left after the big sacrifice..."
About 10K.
So, not even two minutes to seal the void and get on with dying in hell.
Get to work, assholes...
Not you, mate.
I need a word.

I didn't know Eliza would. I--
Shut up. Listen.
You need to go back to Earth and be Jacky Magus.
What... why me?
You don't even like me.
Because I'm a brown guy about your height who does a passable impression.
Yeah. Plus, you're smart enough to realise that without being told.
The gear will help you pull it off, too.
I can't do it. I'm not you.
I'm no genius. I'm not a Superpower!
Well, that makes two of us, numpty.
I'm not a Superpower without the Pyramid.
I hit something comparable to Superpower status when I had 50k in the Pyramid.
I could take a hit and play on their field. That's when I went public.
You formed a pyramid scheme and called it "the Pyramid"?
Hey, proof I'm not a fucking genius either.
I just know shit.
I'm an Atomic. My *power* is to know shit.
Like, I know pi. Not "pi to whatever places." I know pi, full stop.
The day my gift activated, I knew all the truths about reality, instantly, updated on the fly.
Including how to hack them. Magic. How it works, how it could be gamed. I worked out a way to teach people, take a tithe, and pass it up to muggins. Build a cult, use it, save the world.
But why?
You read anarchist history? Ukraine had a functioning anarchist system. Got rolled over by the Bolsheviks. Non-violence doesn't matter if your neighbour is ***really into*** violence.
The second I saw a Superpower, I saw how it was going to be. Someone like me needed a seat at the table.
Valentina was the first Superpower! ***Valentina!***
An angel. An actual, literal higher power. You can't trust a higher power, by definition.
What kind of anarchist would I be if I didn't want to tell god to fuck right off?
She's sweet. Good taste in records. Wouldn't hurt a fly...but would kill a continent.
As long as she's around, the planet will ***never*** be free.
But that was me, and this is you.

My gizmos all have a charge, but they'll run down. It siphons off the people in the Pyramid.
Get the number back to 50k, and you're a Superpower.
Until then, you're just playing the poker game the Major lost.
Who's going to join the Pyramid now you've sacrificed them all?!
See, you **are** smart! Yeah, that's a kick in the balls.
You'll work it out. I trust you.
You trust ***me?***
I do. Got no choice, for a start.
You're a selfish shit, but you like the world. I see that in how you love that poor girl you've doomed.
You want us to live. I do, too. I've compromised everything for that.
"Heavy will keep on rolling dice until they turn up bad. Masumi is Masumi.
"Head Girl Valentina's going to get everyone killed with her kindness.
"Hey--once, Etienne told her that he wanted to take over the world...
"*...and **she still keeps on working** with him.*
"No gods. No masters. Just us.
"I believe in that, and I believe in us, and I believe in you.
"We'll get there, in time.
"You've got to give us time...

"...now fuck off and don't fuck up."
Magus. You did it. The tear is sealed.
The remains of the Queen are being destroyed by one of your cultists...
...are you okay?
What kind of arsehole would be "okay" *now?*
Let me guess: the sort of arsehole who's turned off his fucking emotions.
My condolences, Magus.
"And I've been lying ever since..."

...and now I'm telling the truth.
I'm sorry.
I am, too.
Because he can read my mind. If he looks, he'll know.
If he knows, we know what the utilitarian idol he worships will demand.
That's why you didn't tell me before. You tell me, and you're dead and the system we have created fails.
Yes. And now? If I didn't, you take down the Pyramid as you think I've gone power crazed...and if I tell you, it puts you in this bullshit spot.
I hate it.
Stay here. Think it over.
We'll work something out...

"...we've got time."
Heavy. Valentina and I are calling a meeting of the Superpowers.
All seven of them.
How, motherfucker?
I left a little compulsion inside Tonya. She would report back to me when she slept.
And, I stress, **just** that. To turn her into a honey trap would be a gross ethical violation and rape. I wouldn't do that on a hunch.
Yeah, you **say** that...but if you knew in advance what you'd discover, I'd bet you would have.

I'm sorry you think so little of me.
Hypotheticals are a distraction, and we have more important things to worry about.
For example: telling me this.
You're taking another risk.
No. You won't do anything, as you have too much to lose. An eighteen-year plan, **and** a child you clearly love.
The actual risk would be **not** telling you. Me working on my own counter-scheme, revealed later, and you realise I've known all along and...you acting in rage.
FUMM
Instead, I treat you like an adult. We have a situation. What do we do now?
I would rather make a deal that works for us both. You know we can do that. I quietly killed enough police for you, after all.
And now, after the presidential crisis **you** precipitated, you know exactly what I'll do if you go too far... especially if the child is less protected than you hope.
Don't threaten my kid.
The child is a threat. You are a threat. I am a threat. We are all threats.
I'm sorry it's like this. But also... congratulations.

Thanks. And...oh, for fuck's sake.
Really? You just pointed Tonya in my direction and presumed we'd fuck?
I thought it likely.
She's smart. Talented. Idealistic-but-not-submissive. Beautiful, as you are shallow, young-but-not-too-young.
I would have bet on it. I **did** bet on it.
And her?
I would not break confidence. Prying alone was rude, and certainly immoral.
I would apologise at the meeting, but it should be **only** us. When?
Okay. The kid's eighteen at the weekend. Let's do it Saturday.
Let's throw a party in the afternoon and Tonya can pour a beer over your head.
I've got some bad news, honey.
MOTHERFUCKER!

So, you're finished.
Where's Eliza?
She's having a nice sit-down and a cup of tea and can do without you shouting at her.
What's got your goat?
Is she on your side now?
Wouldn't you like to know.
Yes, I would. That's why I asked.
Nevertheless: enough sparring. We have something important to discuss, in person, as soon as possible.
Heavy has a child. He believes he's a Superpower.
When you've ascertained the truth, we'll decide how to progress.
I know your new friends will have strong feelings about the man they tried to kill doubling his power.
Where are you going--
Give me a minute.
Something's come up.

So, we're agreed?
We have three days to kill Etienne Lux.

Telepathy & The Superpowers

Etienne Lux's abilities arguably shape the detente between the Superpowers more than any other force. Essentially, Superpower status is born of two things: the ability to withstand physical trauma from another Superpower and the ability to withstand direct control from Etienne. However, the specific level of susceptibility varies wildly. It can be sub-divided into three areas . . .

Perception: The mind is visible to Etienne, and can be contacted, with reading of surface thoughts.

Reading: Ability to perceive inner thoughts, and uncover secrets at will.

Control: Ability to absolutely compromise a being.

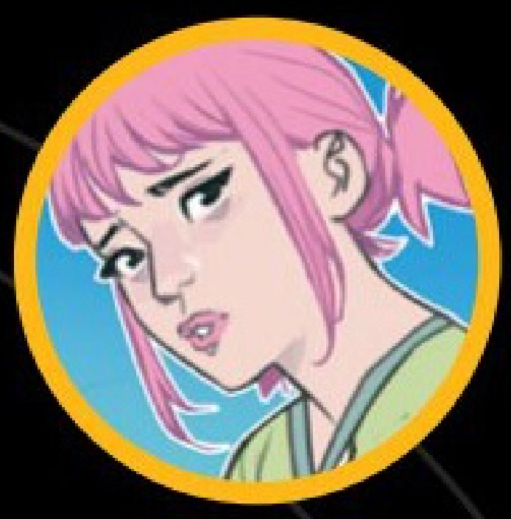
Etienne Lux
Utilitarian telepathic omnipath
Perception: N/A
Reading: N/A
Control: N/A

Heavy
Gravity-controlling revolutionary leader
Perception: Yes
Reading: No
Control: No

Valentina
Mostly moral angelic being
Perception: Yes
Reading: No
Control: No

Eliza Hellbound
Demonically-powered Catholic punk
Perception: Yes
Reading: Yes
Control: No

Dev ("Jacky Magus")
Replacement leader of the Pyramid
Perception: With permission
Reading: No
Control: No



Masumi
Disassociation kaiju and artist
Perception: Yes
Reading: Yes
Control: No

Secret Pact 🟢
Pro-Atomic 🔴
Neutral 🟡
USA-aligned 🔵

Kid Ignition
Heavy's Atomic firebrand son
Perception: Unknown
Reading: Unknown
Control: Unknown

Tonya
Atomic-embedded journalist
Perception: Yes
Reading: Yes
Control: Yes

Isabella
Masumi's lover and PA
Perception: Yes
Reading: Yes
Control: Yes

The General
U.S. Pyramid liaison
Perception: With permission
Reading: No
Control: No

Chapter Eleven | **IN THE WAR ROOM**

MELBOURNE, 1999.
First here, Mr. Keen!

Not all of us have our own personal fleets or can *fly.* Some of us walk.
And I like to make sure it's safe. Do *you* see anyone?
Nah. Except the technicians.
You're worried about someone throwing a surprise at the party?
IT'S YOUR BIG DAY!
Not now.
At least, unless I've done something to earn your censure.
Oh, honey, you've done plenty to piss me off...yet, here you are.
You know if I had to kill you, I'd just kill you, sweetness.
I do. Thank you.
IT'S YOUR BIG DAY!
Er...you've just finished a coffee. This can't be good for you. Hell, it can't be good for *your bladder.*
Or is it ethical to suffer bladder discomfort for the sake of the world?
If necessary, I am quite capable of censoring my bladder pain response.
Et! You're going to end up hurting yourself...
"Okay. We know we have to kill him..."

THE PYRAMID, 3 DAYS EARLIER.
...and now we have to work out *how* to get the toe-rag in an alleyway and kick him to death.
Dev, you can stop that now. You're *American.*
You don't have to speak like him.
No. I have to keep the mask on. I can't risk shitting the bed by saying "restroom" at the wrong time.
After Etienne is gone, we can think about it. They won't realise I'm faking having big-boy pants.
Unless Valentina demands proof *I'm* a Superpower...
...though she *may* cover for me if she did. She understands what I do for the system and...
Fuck, this is a mess.
We can still come clean. Reveal the truth...
Yes, you are no Superpower...but you are under *my* protection. They touch you, and they pay the consequences.
Is Etienne going to believe you'll kill a continent to save my ass? Even to save the Pyramid?
No. You're you, Eliza.
He'll nod politely, and then find a way to compromise me... and then he's got the controls to the Pyramid.
He's all about the ethical calculus, and isn't it just lucky that somehow the fancy math always ends up with him in charge...
Still: there are alternatives to mortal sin...

Construct me a psychically-sealed cell. Enclose me as an anchorite...
We claim I have abandoned the Earth for contemplation of my sins.
It doesn't matter how many times we go through it, it doesn't work. Yeah, it sounds like the sort of thing you'd do...
...but eventually your unholy ass will burn through my numinous tech.
It would buy us time, but...
No. You are right. We can pray for something else, or we can take this opportunity. Most of his attention is on Heavy's child. The rest will be on you.
He thinks me a sick woman... and, I suspect, one he believes easily manipulable.
Yeah. This is our chance.
The clock is ticking.
"Where are they?"

I'd have thought at least Heavy would be here on time, being his party.
They're in transit. I flew past them.
They picked up Masumi, and you know how she gets travel-sick. They probably don't want to shake her up by going full speed.
Let me check.
Ah, yes. There they are. You can use my eyes.
See them?
Ah, our showman.
One could hardly miss him.
"If I know where he is, I can kill him instantly."

...but his dying wrath would wipe out a continent.
Hmm. It's Australia.
Maybe the psychic wave wouldn't even reach New Zealand...
Are you suggesting we let ***Australia*** die?
...No. Fuck, Jacky was right. It's easy to treat it like a fucking board game and not think of the bodies.
Plus, Etienne's stronger every day. Maybe it would reach China. Maybe...
We have to keep it confined.
The truth: he doesn't make house calls to the Pyramid because it's a psychic shield.
It's built so he can't see in... but if he ever was inside, he couldn't send anything out. He knows if he stepped inside, I could just kill him, consequence free.
We need to get him inside a sealed environment with a similar set-up...
...alas, Heavy has us meeting in a fucking stadium.
Why?
Big, open, clear space, plus Heavy is a proud papa...
...***and*** an egomaniac...

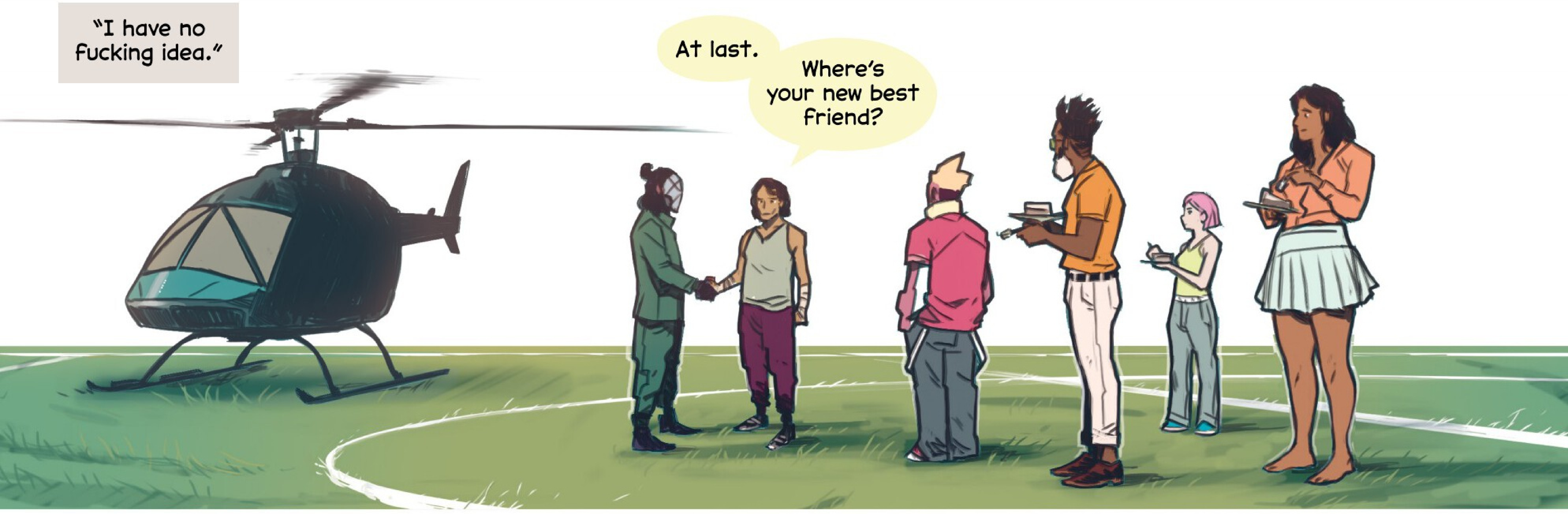
"...I guess that runs in the family."
IGNIS
"I wish I wasn't here."

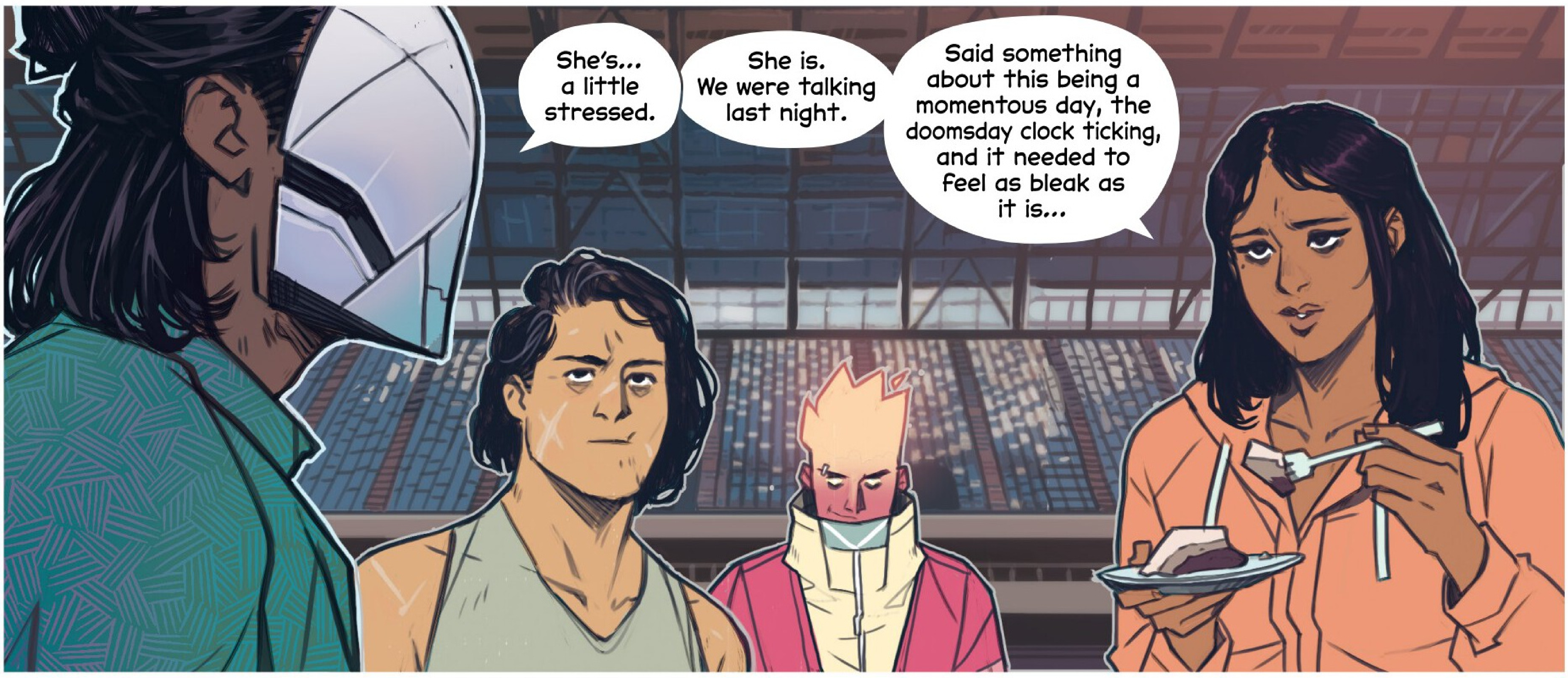
I just feel it's all tag-along, like I'm the friend they've had since school, and it'd be rude to not invite me.
I get all stressed out, and that's...well, not good, right, Isabella?
Then don't be. Skip it, *Mía Bella.*
Sit in your room and watch *Evangelion* ***again.***
I wish you were here.
You said go to Mumbai. Do the opening.
It's work, you said. It's fun, you said.
I did, as I knew you didn't want to come, and I knew you'd do it if I asked.
I can handle this...
Your transport is ready.
"My transport." As in, Heavy's going to float us down.
I'm lucky he doesn't just drag me through all of Haven.
Are you ***sure*** *you're okay...?*
...As sure as I can be. Me ending the world at a meeting about the end of the world would be bad, even for me. I...
Yes, I'm fine. Etienne is here. Etienne will look out for me...
"He is an omnipath. He can hear the chatter of bugs."

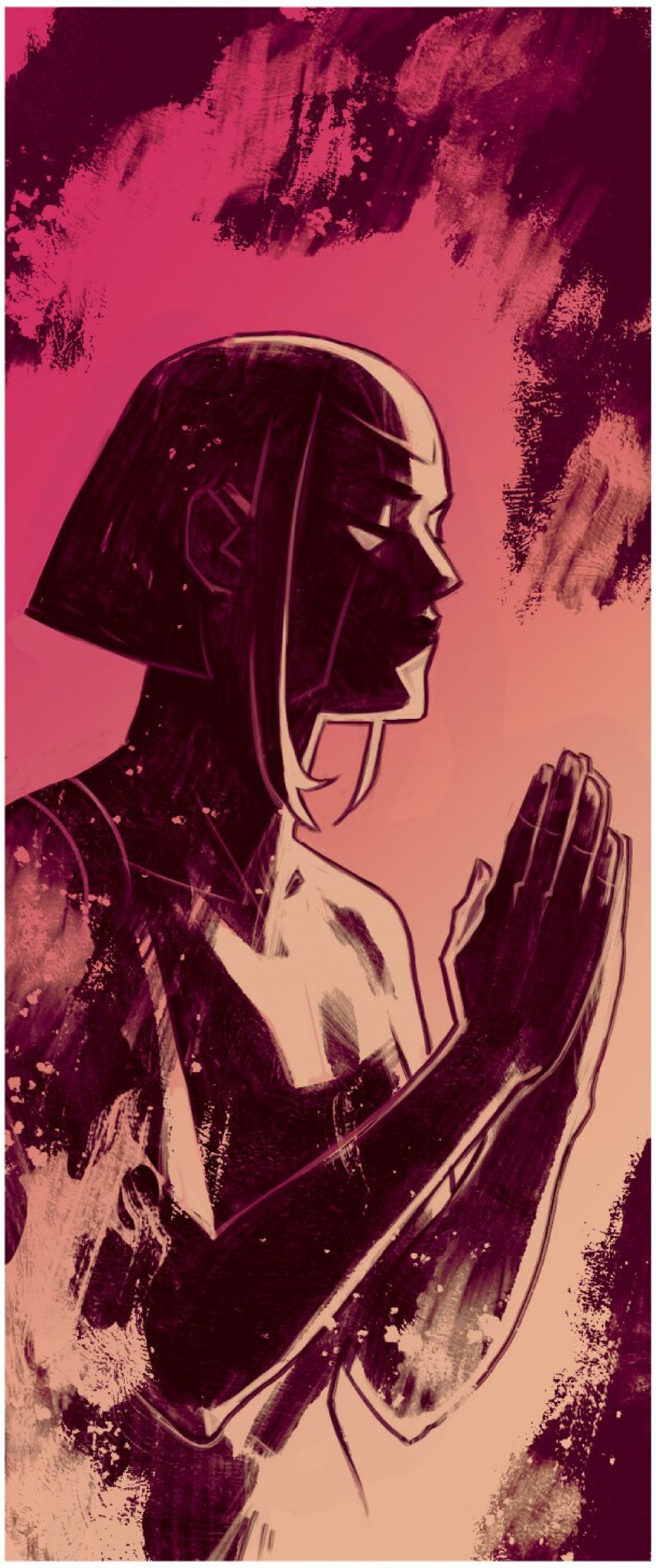
Do you believe this trickery possible?
I'm a fucking wizard. I'm all about the impossible.
Let me brief the troops.
Hey, Arseholes. Your mission, if you choose to accept it-- which you fucking will-- is get into the stadium tomorrow night and deploy these...
They're clearing a mile cordon before the Superpower chin-wag...
We shadow-suit in, and power up the masks to full psychic blank...
You're building a psychic cage.
You're trying to kill Etienne.
Like a little green fuck once said...
...there is no "try."
He won't be the only one looking.
The shadow-suits will work for anyone Heavy has on staff.
The problem?

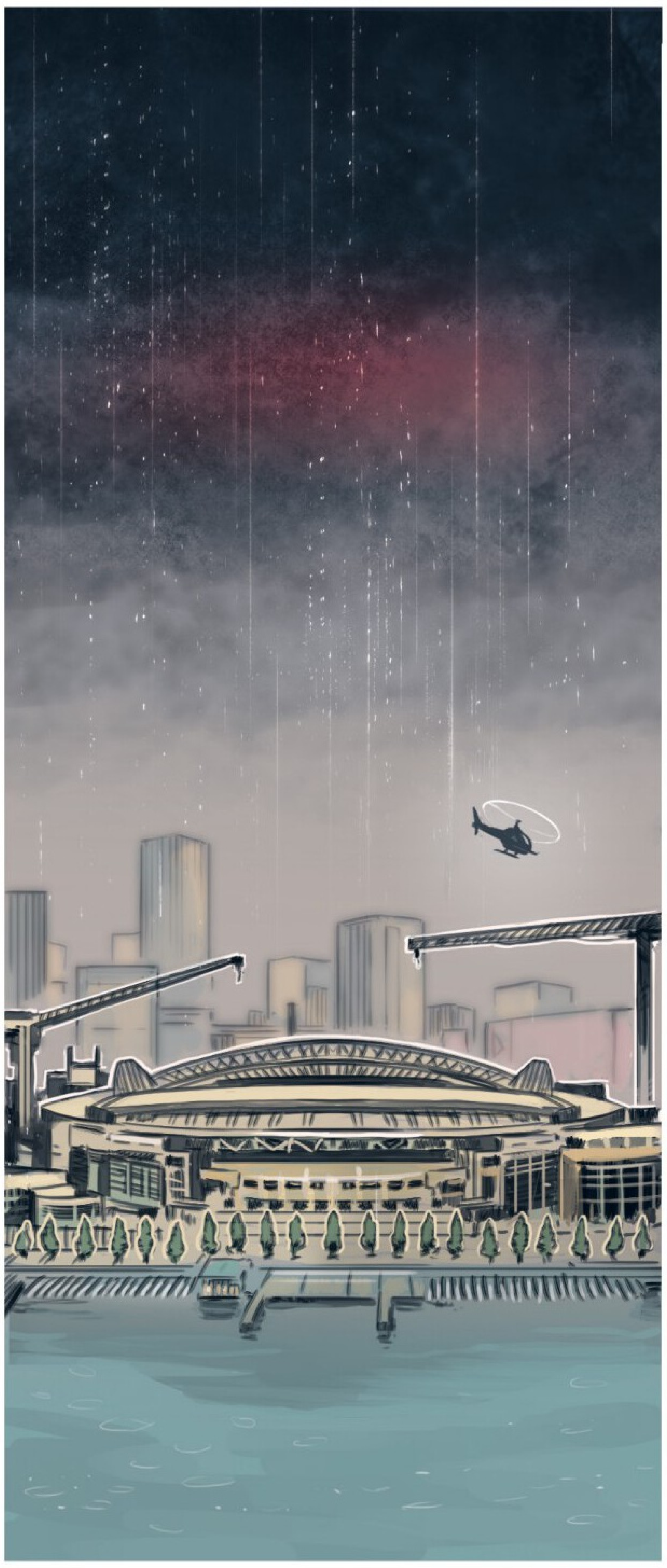
"Valentina."
Hey, Birthday Boy!
18
I'm not fucking six.
Hey, Lux.
Tonya sends fuck yous.
She has my apologies, for what they're worth. I wish they could be in person, but...
...Superpowers only.
That remains to be seen.
Which relies on Magus. Where is...
Ah. Here comes the devil.
"It's *another* sin."

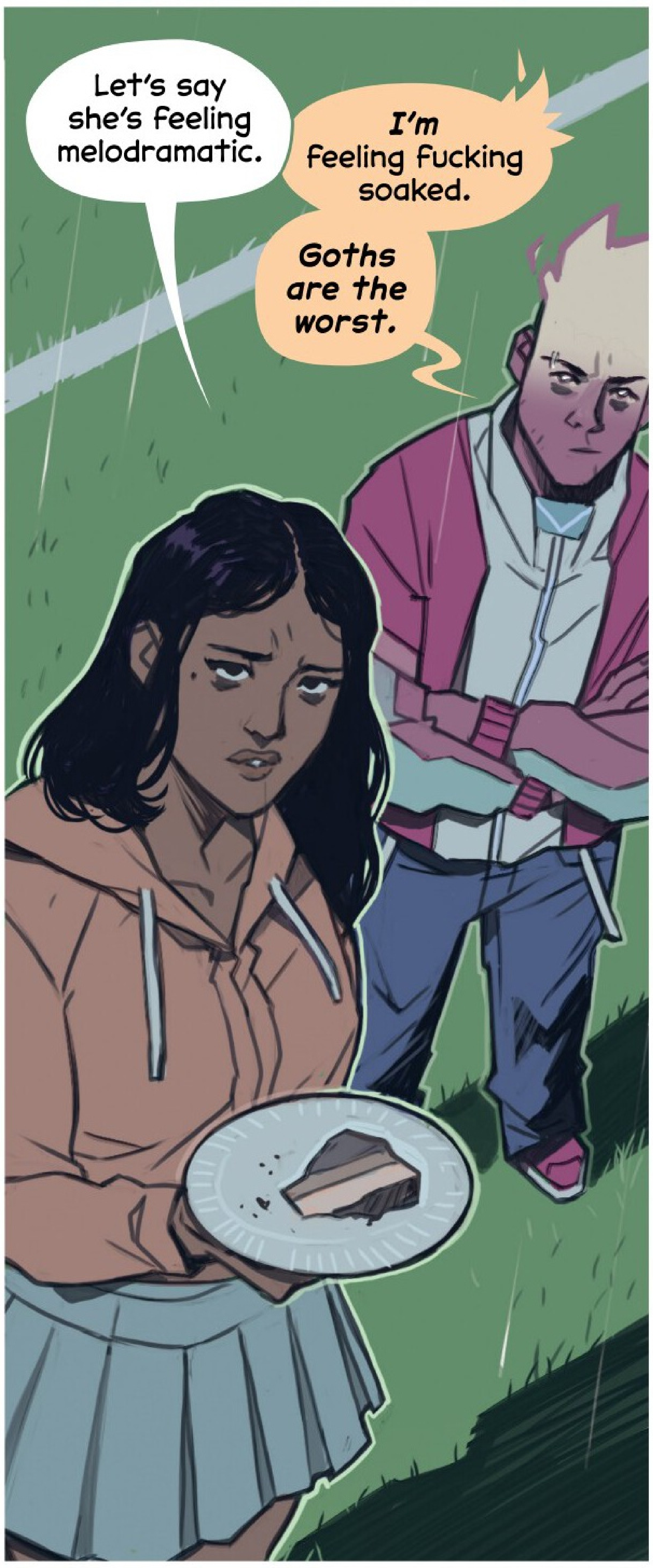
I don't like to lie.
You don't *have* to lie.
"Invite her over. Talk about your fears. Your worries for damnation. Your dread about the party.
"She's nice. She's going to listen. Have a heart-to-heart.
"And we'll be at work, setting it all up.
"...and then, even if *everything* goes perfectly...
"...none of it matters if we can't get the roof closed."
If we can't, we abort.
Yes. And then?


"I have no fucking idea."
At last.
Where's your new best friend?


She's... a little stressed.
She is. We were talking last night.
Said something about this being a momentous day, the doomsday clock ticking, and it needed to feel as bleak as it is...






Let's say she's feeling melodramatic.
I'm feeling fucking soaked.
Goths are the worst.

Let me burn up the rain--
TZ
TZ
TZ
TZ
Fuck, no. *No* powering up.
Yeah, he's right. Chill, kid.
Jesus, is this what being a Superpower is like?
TZ
TZ
TZ
Being *Fucking* rained on?
Yes. Metaphorically.
Can we just close the roof?
Or get an umbrella?
Very well. I'll ask the technicians...
The roof is *cool.* This is new.
WWWRRR
WWWRR
Good. I wasn't going to do this while being pissed on.
Yes, you will. Quit wasting time, asshole, *do* it.
Your satanic girlfriend can catch up.
What's taking the time, man?
Okay...this is what I've got. Valentina?
The boy can take out a planet. Crazy tough.
Psychically resistant...

...with *marginal* vulnerability.
It is interesting. I can't read him, like I can't read his father. But I *could* influence him. An interesting mix...
So I could remove the boy... or Magus could, if he had time to work out a method.
Hey, the boy has a name, and if you try it, I'll fuck you up.
Shut the fuck up, Alex. This is serious.
BEP
Eliza trumps Magus, too. One of us being able to counter someone isn't the end of the world.
I mean, poor choice of words.
But Etienne is fucking Etienne and Eliza is on *Magus'* side? Or is she?
Get her here now. I need to know where she stands *now.*
Dad...what's happening?
Get the fucking mental bitch here or we are gone...
...and if any of you try anything, I will tear this planet in two!
BEP
Eliza, get here, luv.

Magus--

Everyone, please…I know this is extreme, but…don't explode. Give me a second.
Let me check if we've killed a continent. *Please.*
Thank fuck. It held.
No psychic leak.
What the fuck?
We regret it. It was… necessary.
Yeah, we can explain. It's for the best. Ultimately? *Finally?*
We're free.

NEW YORK.
le coin pétale
coffee
pâtisserie
OPEN
What can I get for you, honey?
Just a coffee. Black.
...Can I trouble you with a problem? I feel a little unmoored.
Being a waitress is like being a bartender, but sober. Mostly sober, anyway.
What's on your mind?
Imagine. Someone tried to kill you. They failed. You're alone. You know they'll try again.
It's just you and them. What do you do?
What kind of trouble are you in, honey?
Humor me.
"You or them"? What kind of choice is that? Someone tried that with me, and they are *gone.*
An eye for an eye, right?

Hmm. I can see your logic...
...but is it ethical?

THE POWER FANTASY

Follow along monthly
Issue 12 on sale in November 2025

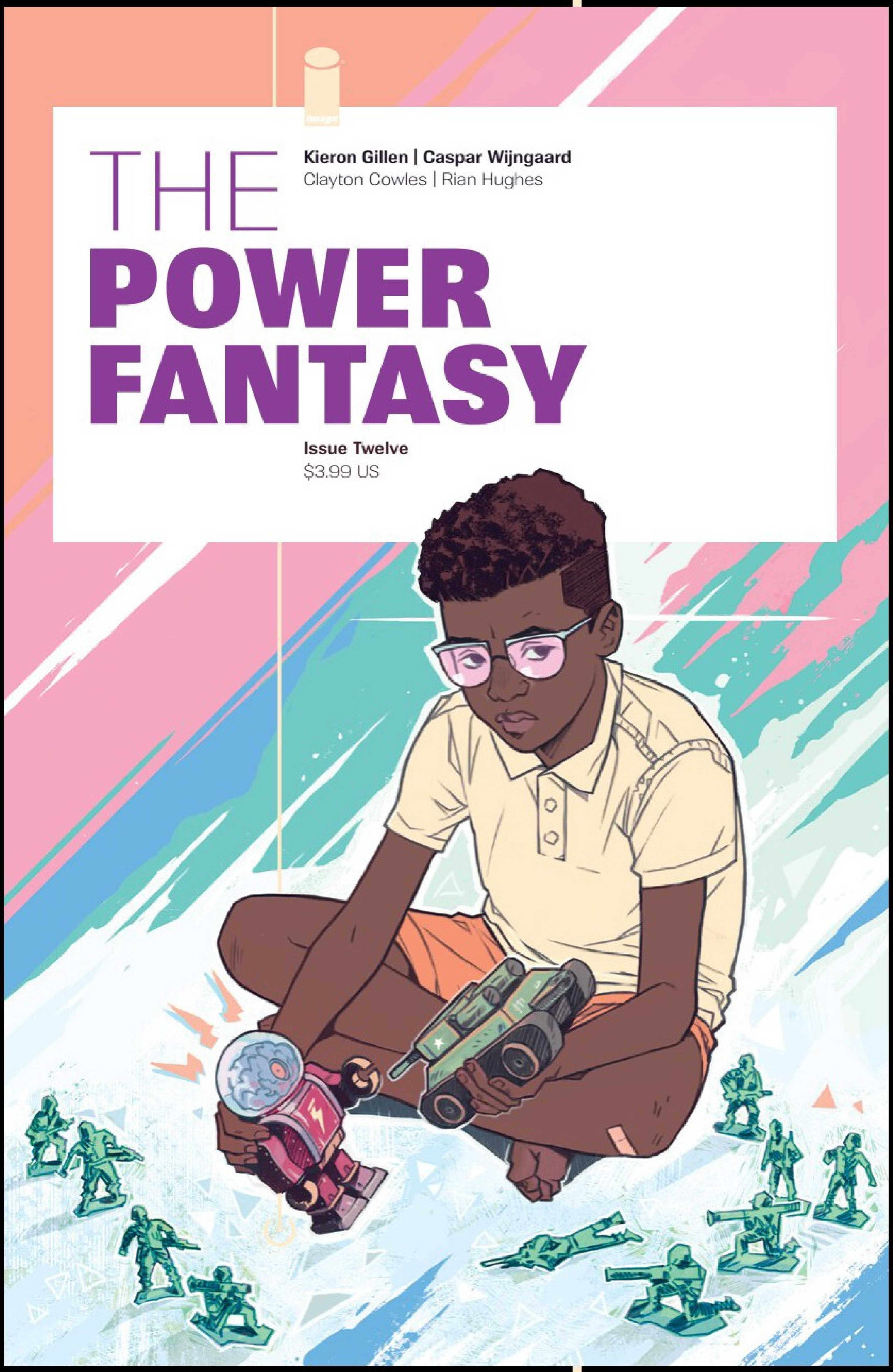


image
Kieron Gillen | Caspar Wijngaard
Clayton Cowles | Rian Hughes
THE POWER FANTASY
Issue Twelve
$3.99 US

image
Kieron Gillen | Caspar Wijngaard
Clayton Cowles | Rian Hughes
THE POWER FANTASY
Issue Thirteen
$3.99 US

COVER GALLERY

We love Caspar's covers, so here they are, in a fancy gallery. We also like our chums doing covers, so here they are, too. Hurrah!

Issue Six: Abigail Jill Harding
Issue Seven: Khary Randolph
Issue Eight: DANI
Issue Nine: Jamie McKelvie
Issue Ten: Luana Vecchio
Issue Eleven: Luigi Formisano

Kieron Gillen | **Caspar Wijngaard**
Clayton Cowles | Rian Hughes

THE POWER FANTASY

Issue Six
$3.99 US

THE POWER FANTASY

Kieron Gillen | Caspar Wijngaard
Clayton Cowles | Rian Hughes

Issue Seven
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THE POWER FANTASY

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Issue Eight
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image

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THE POWER FANTASY

Kieron Gillen | **Caspar Wijngaard**
Clayton Cowles | Rian Hughes

Issue Ten
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image

THE POWER FANTASY

Kieron Gillen | Caspar Wijngaard
Clayton Cowles | Rian Hughes

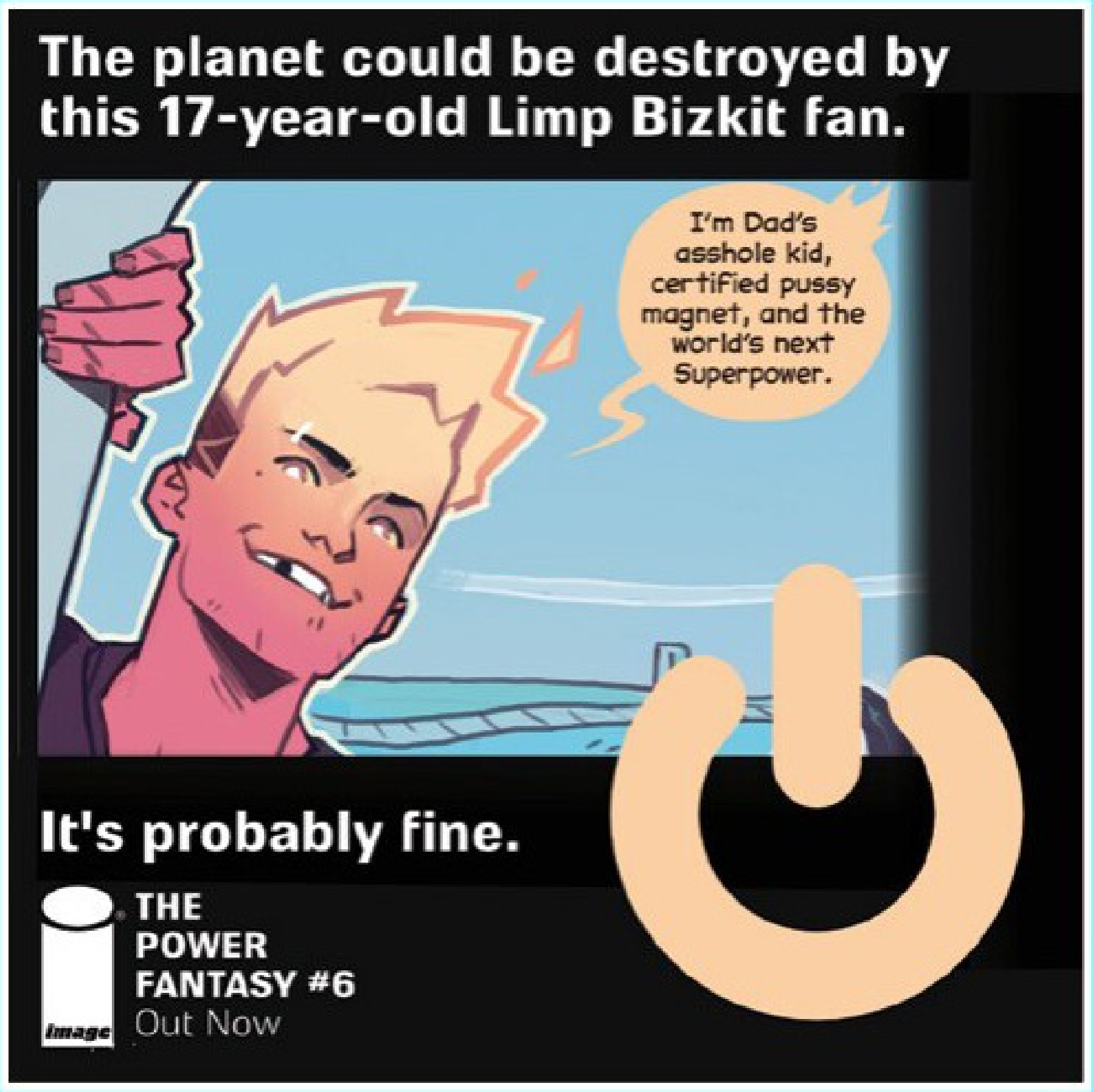
Issue Eleven
$3.99 US

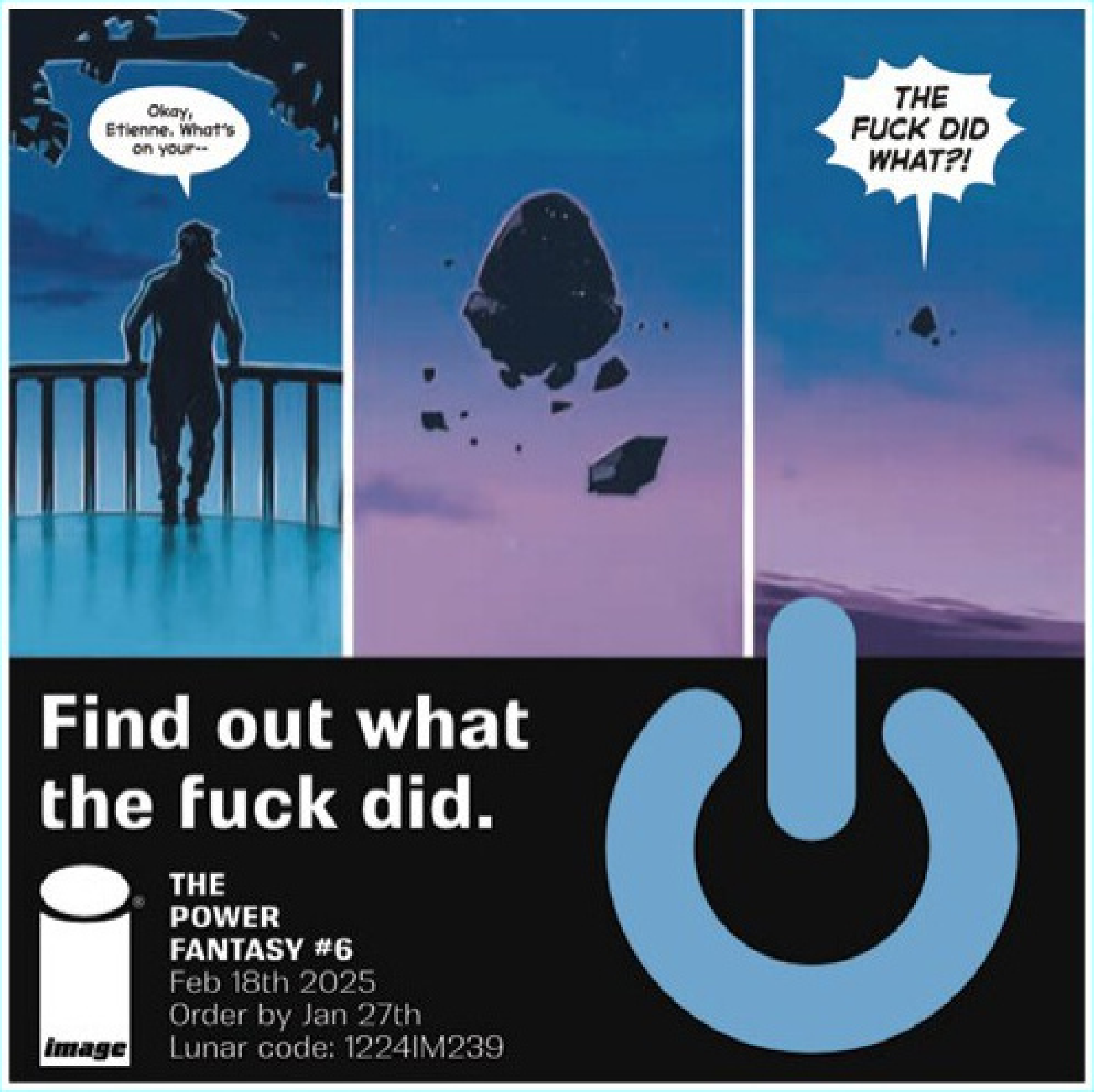
モンスタ
片思の愛
怪獣
アーティスト
片思い
UNETHICAL MY ASS
YOUR FACE HERE
PEACE
傷ついた心

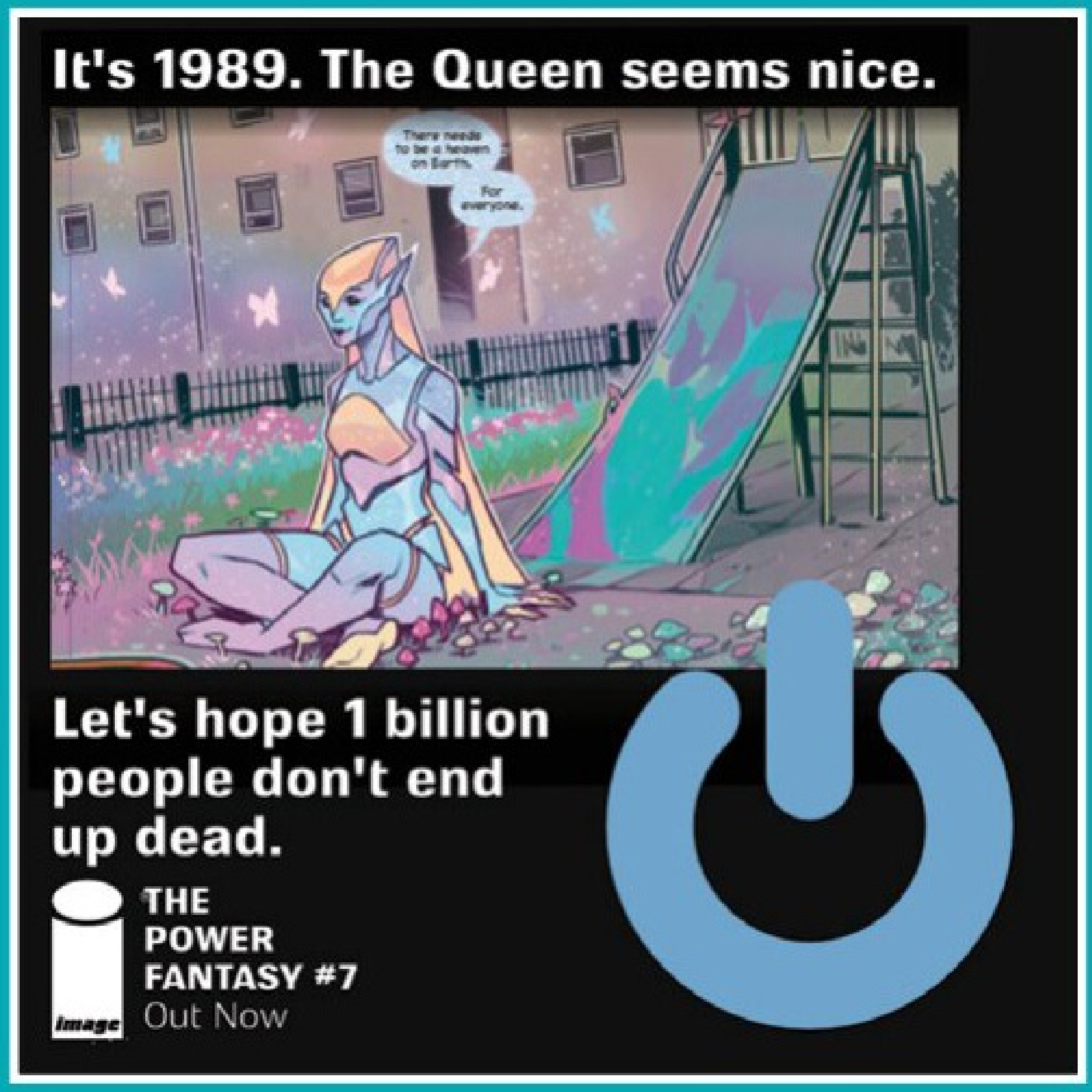
THE MARKETING FANTASY

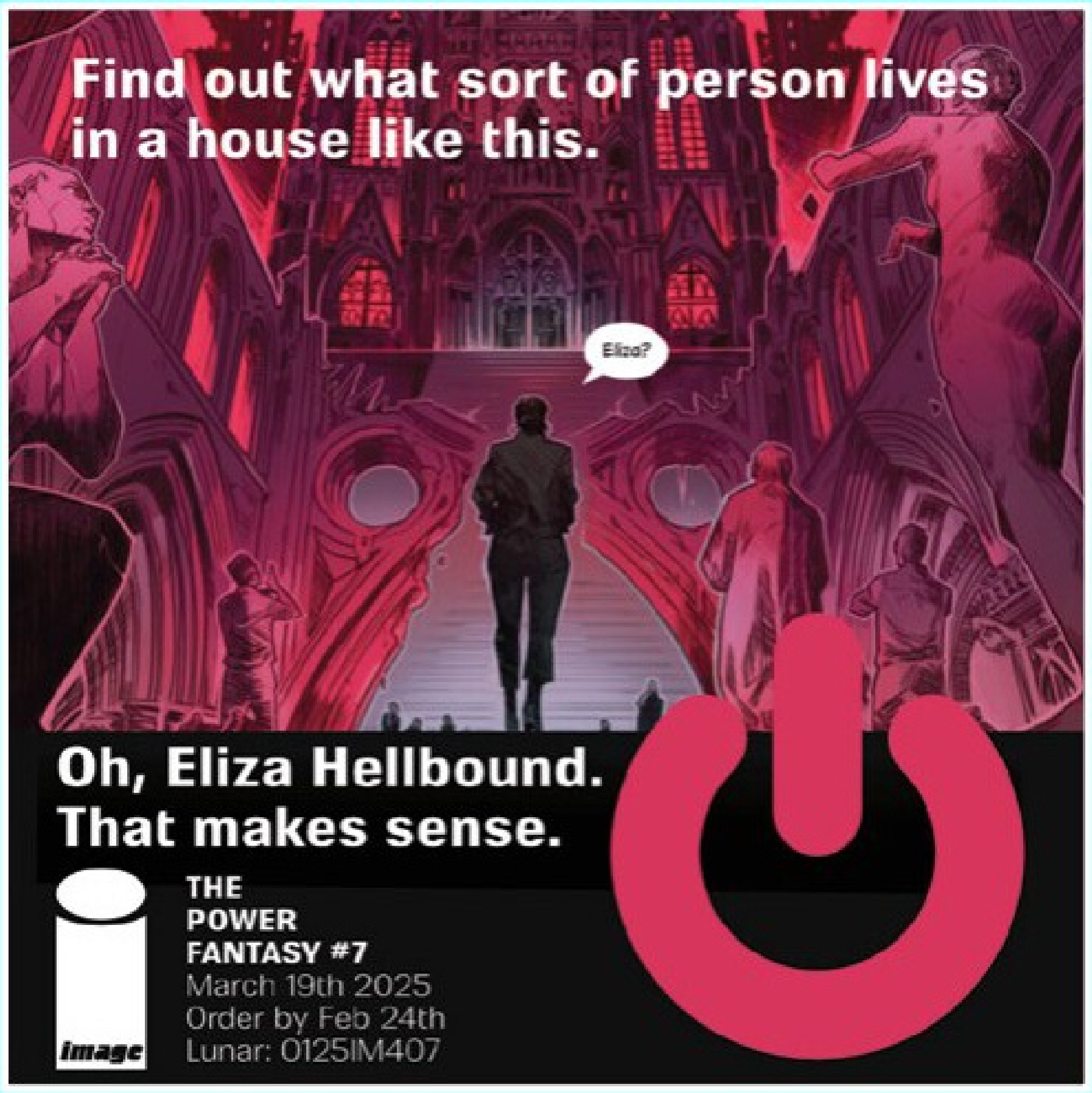
Early on in the production of *The Power Fantasy*, we made a mistake. We gave Kieron access to the templates to do social media hype posts. This has spiralled out of control, with one (or more) of them dropping as issues come out or are approaching orders. Folks seem to like them, especially when we're being a bit bad.

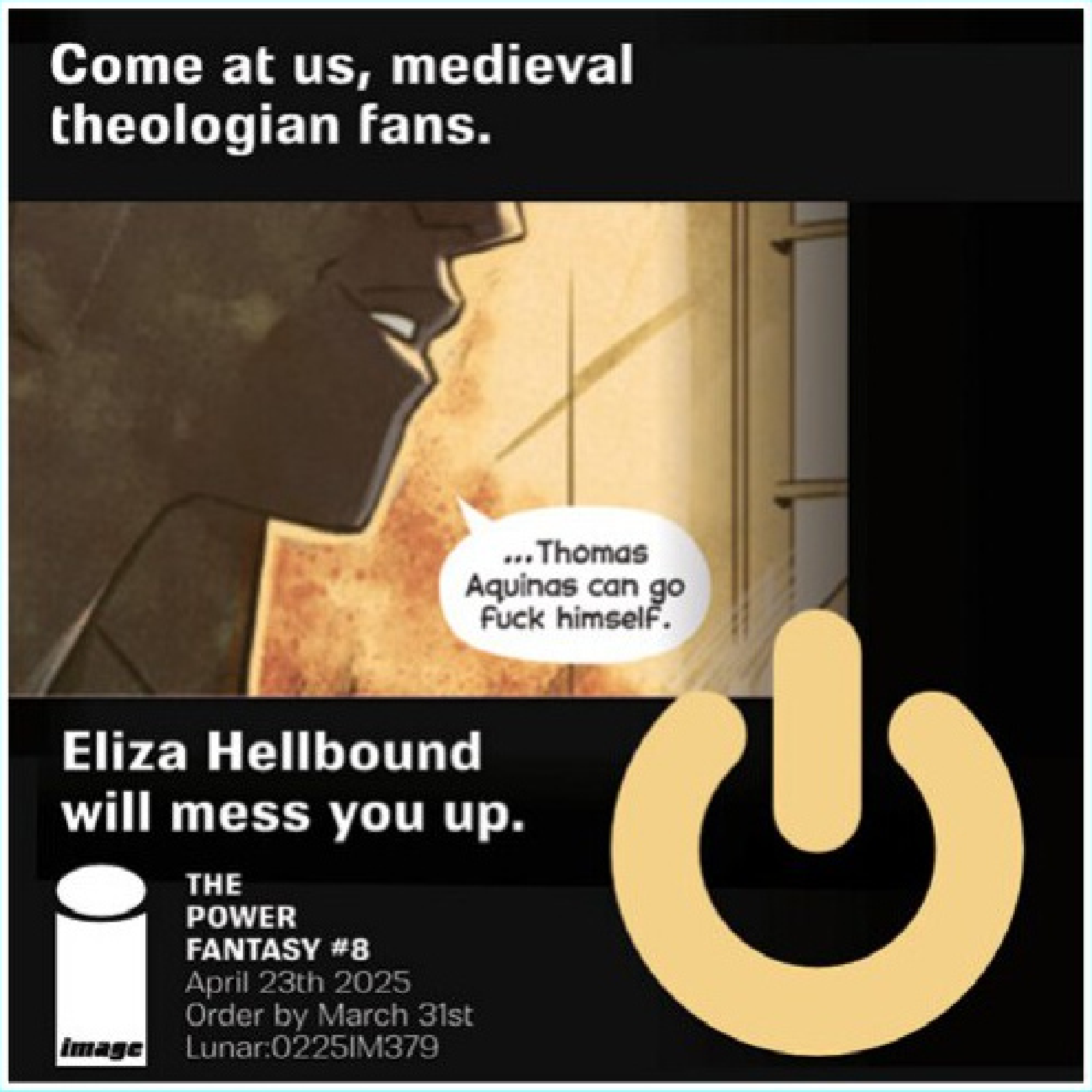
Following Kieron on Instagram is likely the best way to see his marketing skills in action: instagram.com/kierongillen

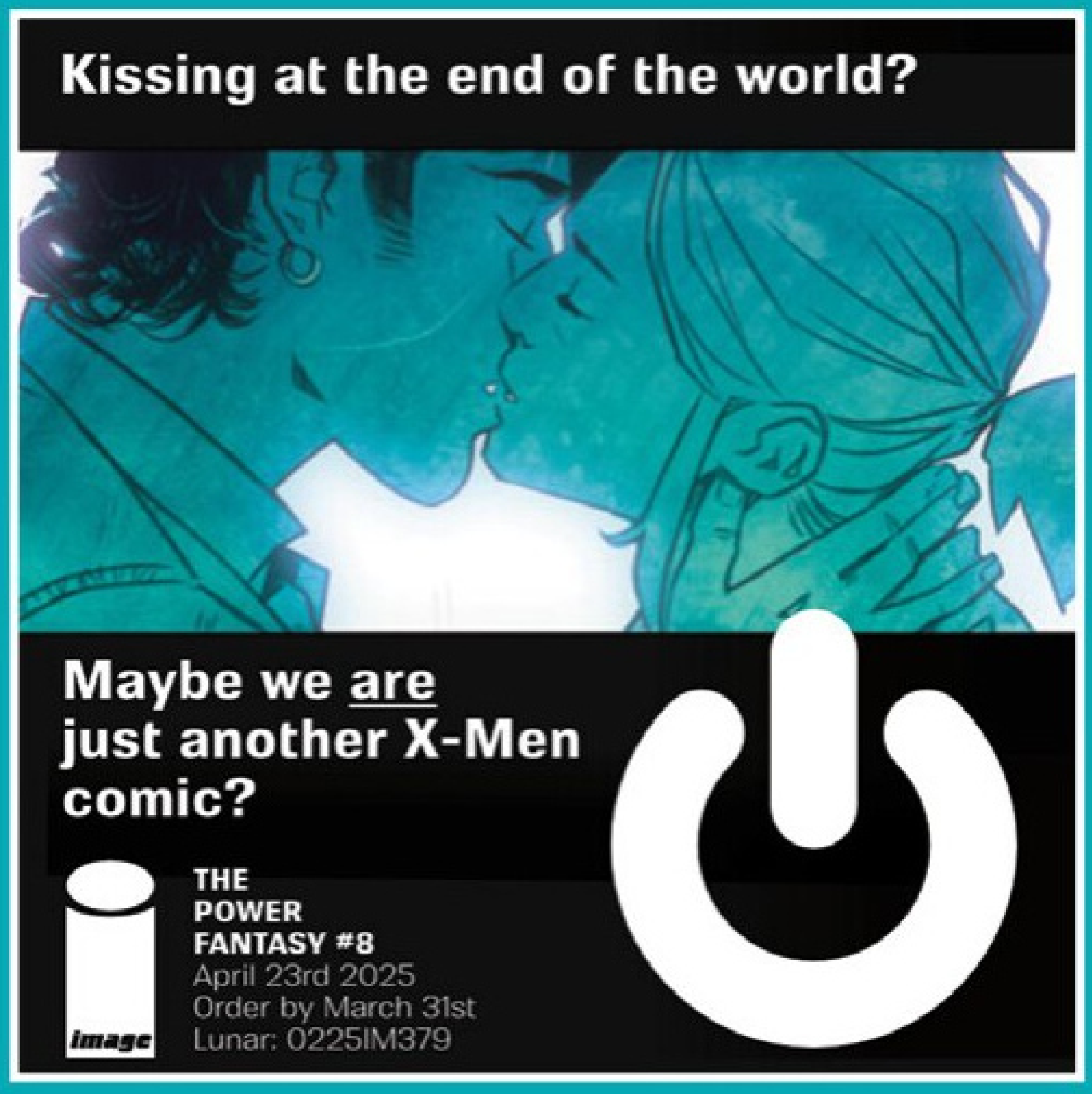

The planet could be destroyed by this 17-year-old Limp Bizkit fan.
I'm Dad's asshole kid, certified pussy magnet, and the world's next Superpower.
It's probably fine.
THE POWER FANTASY #6
Out Now
image

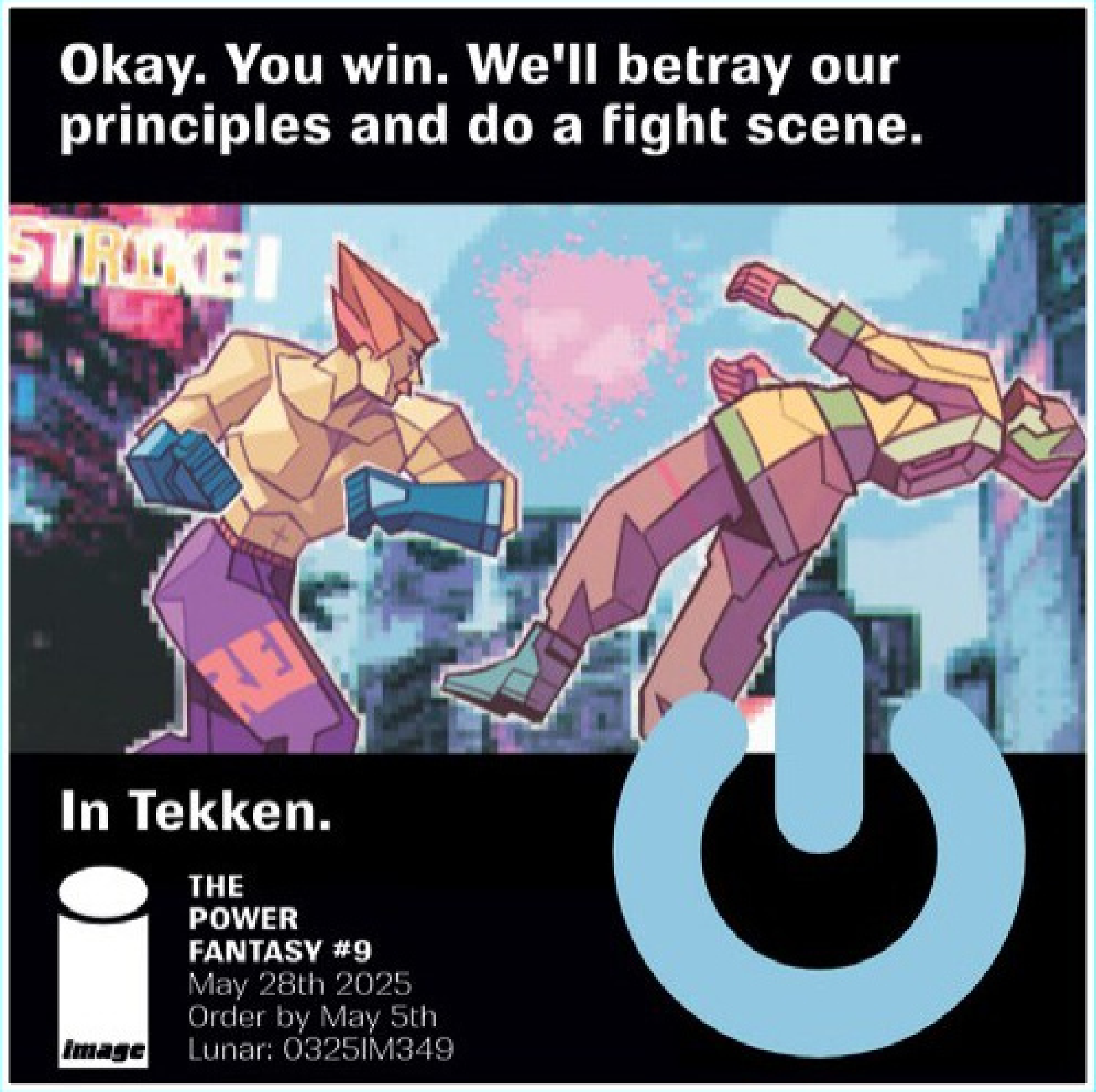

Okay, Etienne. What's on your--
THE FUCK DID WHAT?!
Find out what the fuck did.
THE POWER FANTASY #6
Feb 18th 2025
Order by Jan 27th
Lunar code: 1224IM239
image

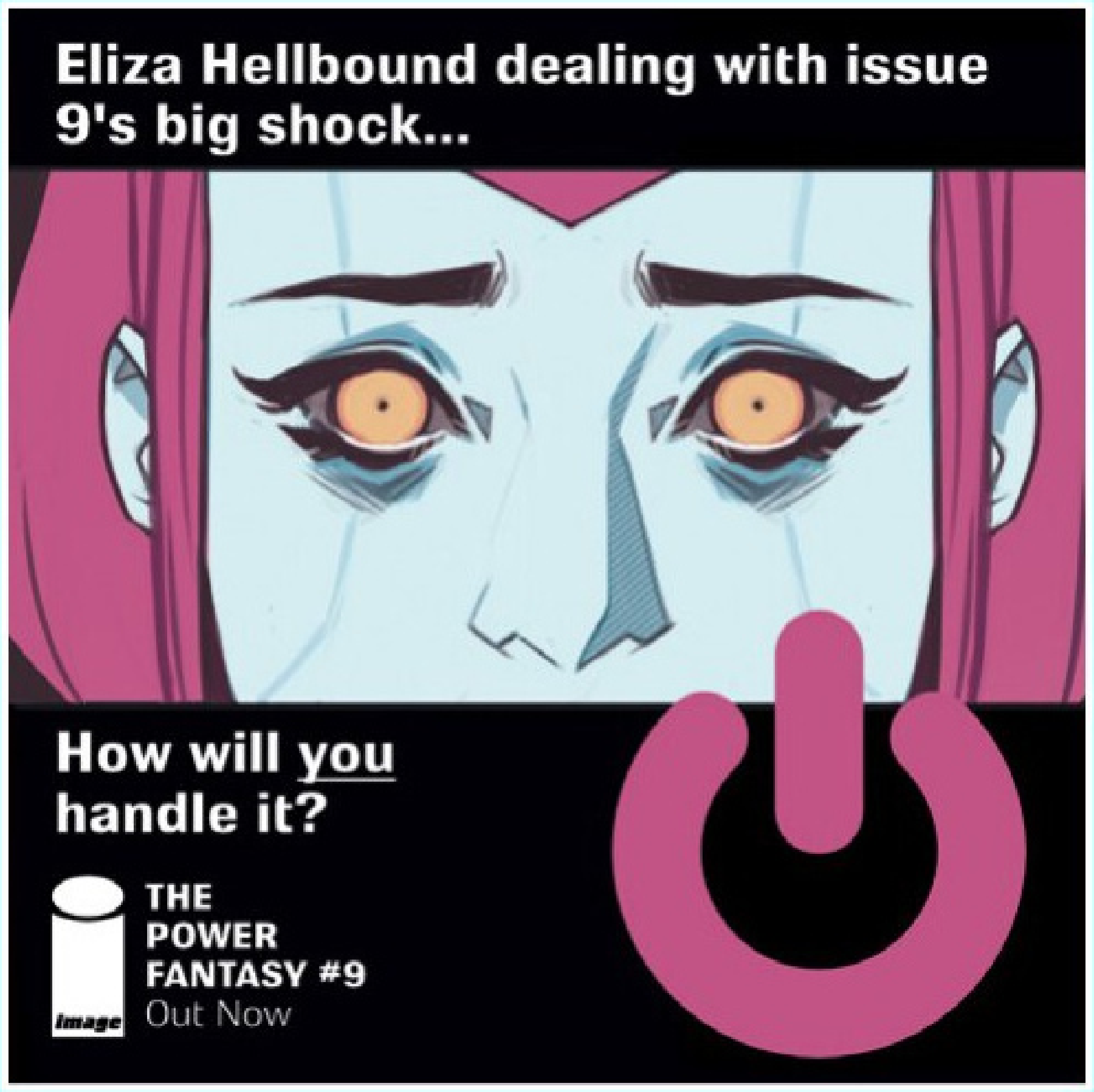

It's 1989. The Queen seems nice.
There needs to be a heaven on Earth.
For everyone.
Let's hope 1 billion people don't end up dead.
THE POWER FANTASY #7
Out Now
image

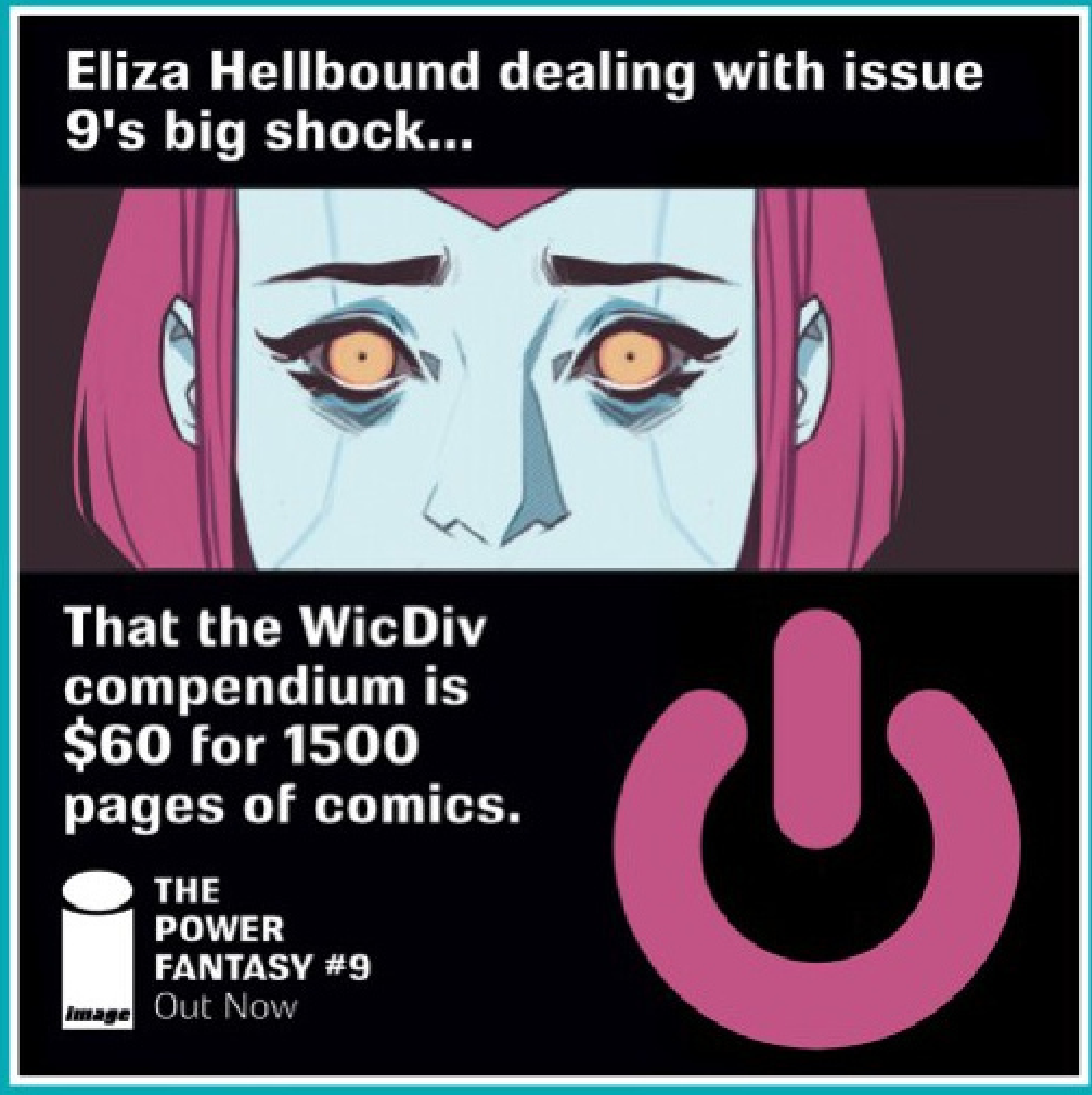

Find out what sort of person lives in a house like this.
Eliza?
Oh, Eliza Hellbound. That makes sense.
THE POWER FANTASY #7
March 19th 2025
Order by Feb 24th
Lunar: 0125IM407
image

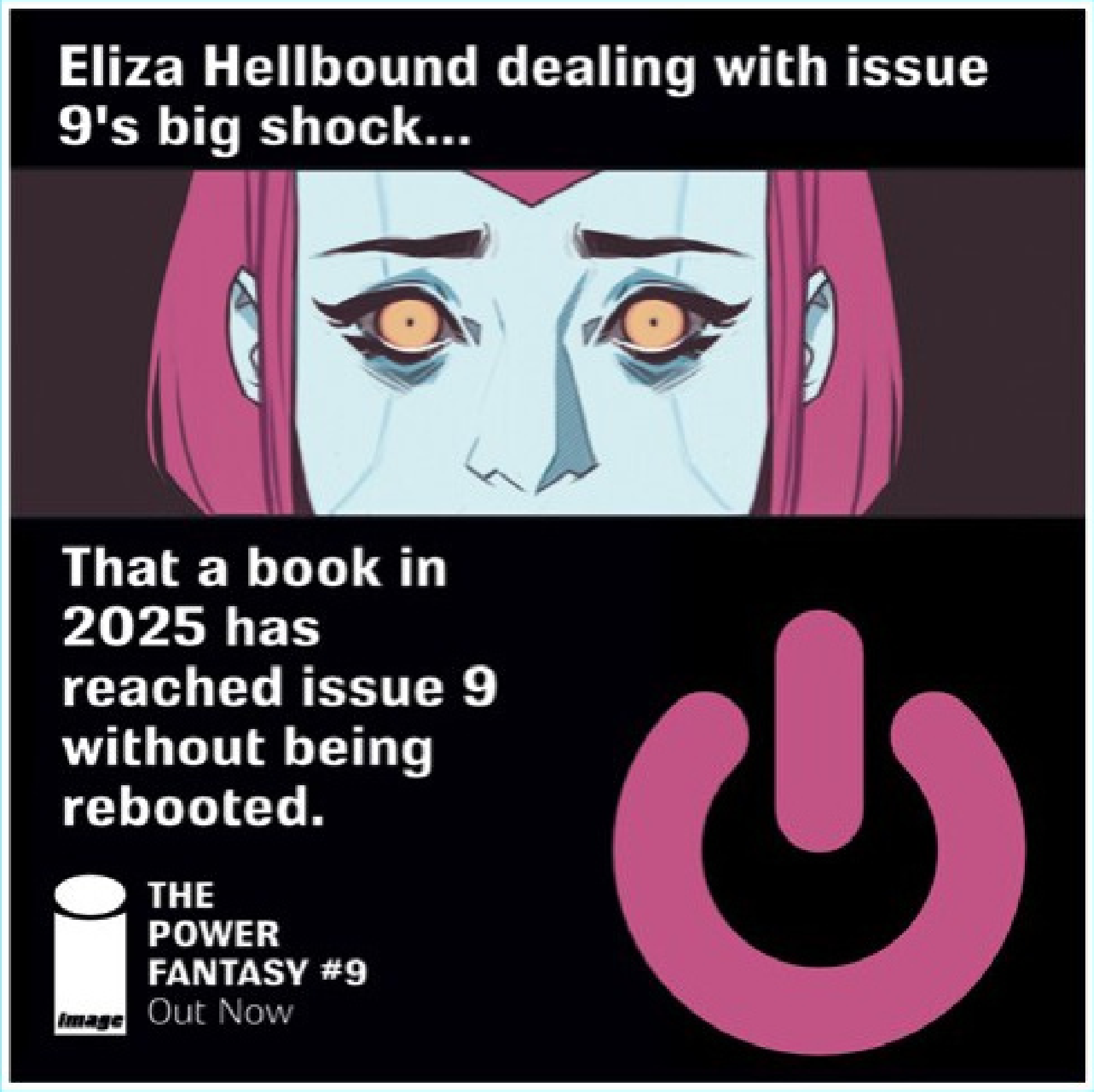

Come at us, medieval theologian fans.
...Thomas Aquinas can go fuck himself.
Eliza Hellbound will mess you up.
THE POWER FANTASY #8
April 23th 2025
Order by March 31st
Lunar:0225IM379
image


Kissing at the end of the world?
Maybe we are just another X-Men comic?
THE POWER FANTASY #8
April 23rd 2025
Order by March 31st
Lunar: 0225IM379
image


Okay. You win. We'll betray our principles and do a fight scene.
STRIKE!
In Tekken.
THE POWER FANTASY #9
May 28th 2025
Order by May 5th
Lunar: 0325IM349
image


Eliza Hellbound dealing with issue 9's big shock...
How will you handle it?
THE POWER FANTASY #9
Out Now
image

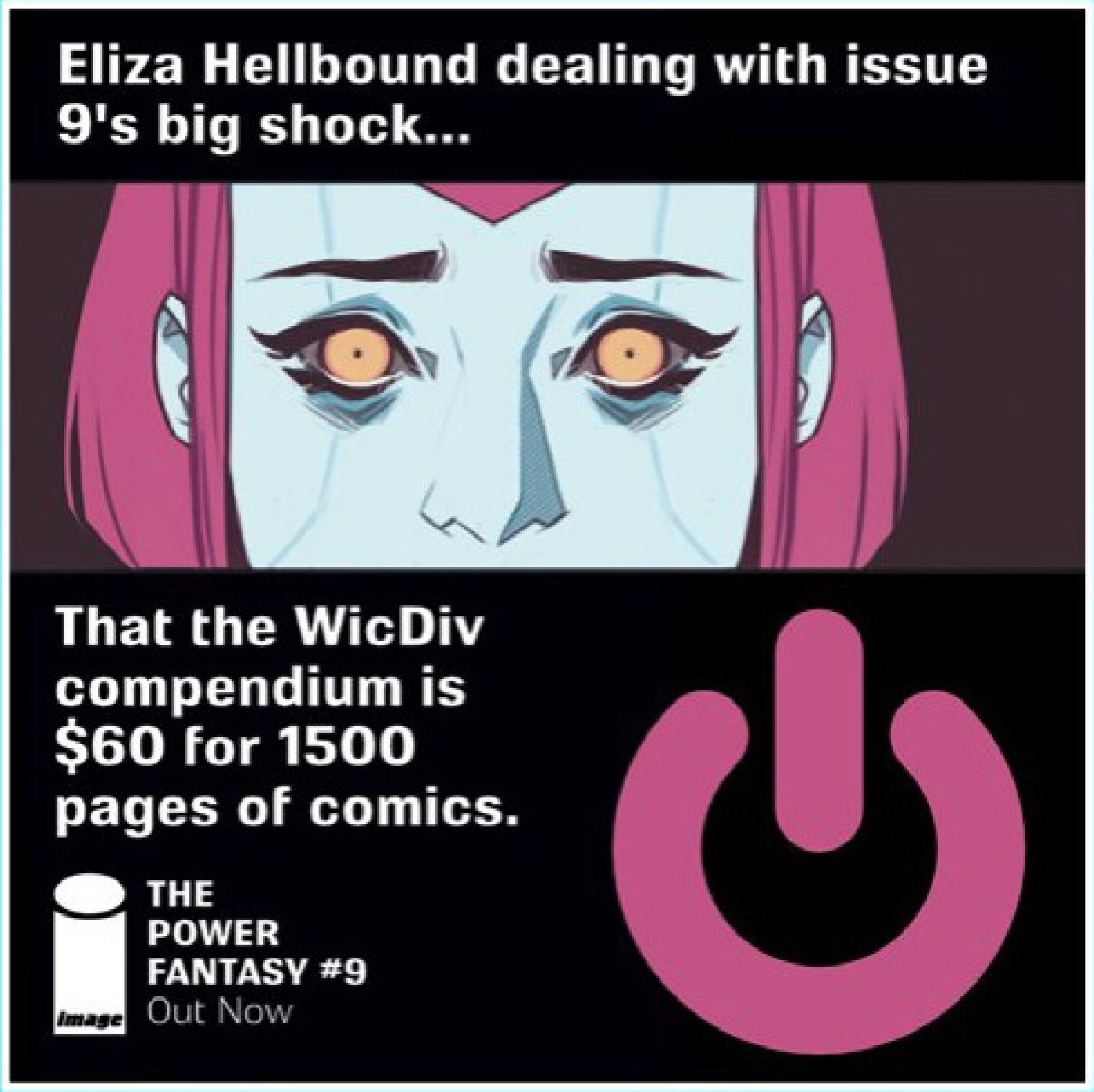

Eliza Hellbound dealing with issue 9's big shock...
That the WicDiv compendium is $60 for 1500 pages of comics.
THE POWER FANTASY #9
Out Now
image



Eliza Hellbound dealing with issue 9's big shock...

That a book in 2025 has reached issue 9 without being rebooted.

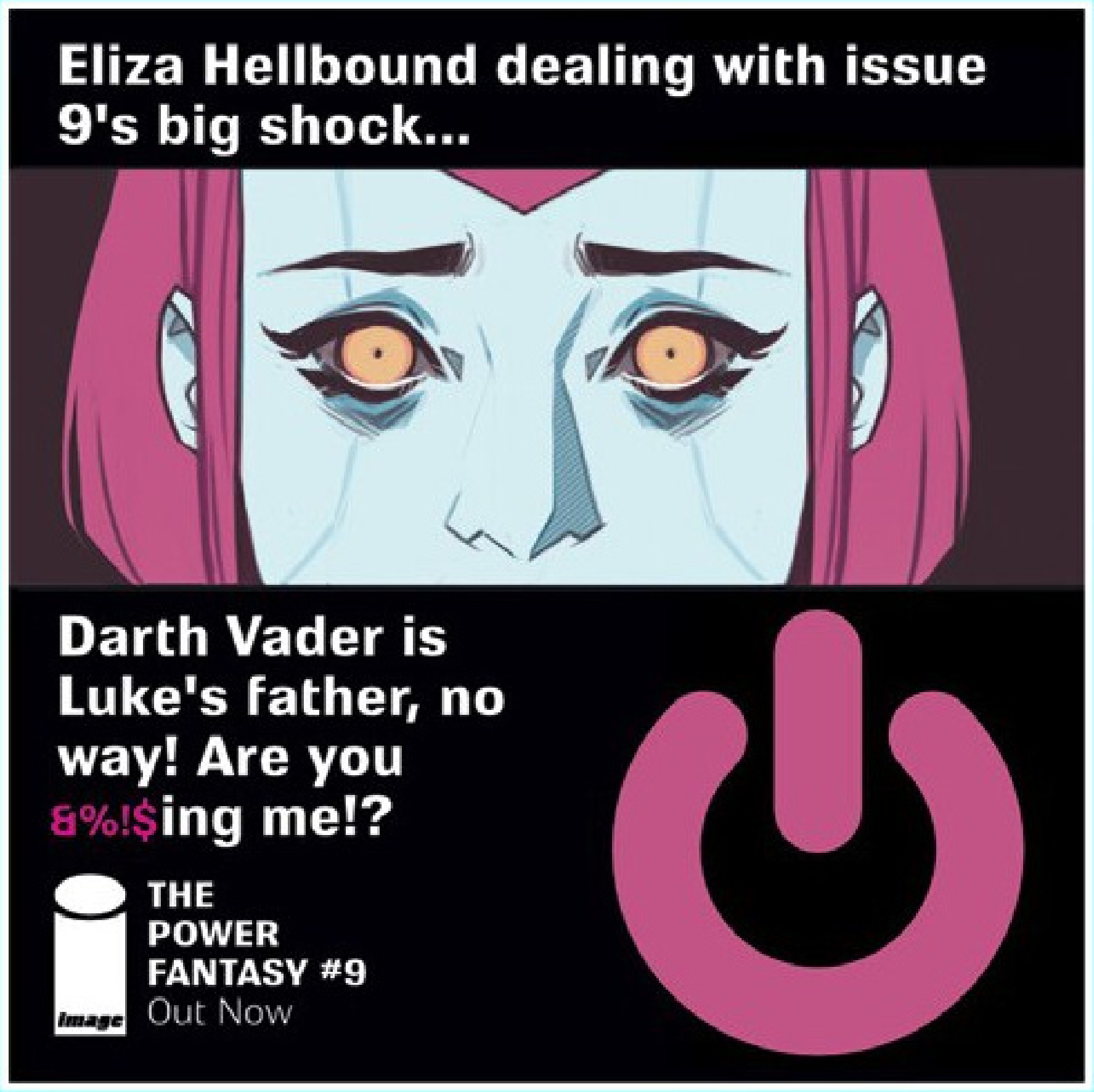
THE POWER FANTASY #9
Out Now



Eliza Hellbound dealing with issue 9's big shock...

That the WicDiv compendium is $60 for 1500 pages of comics.

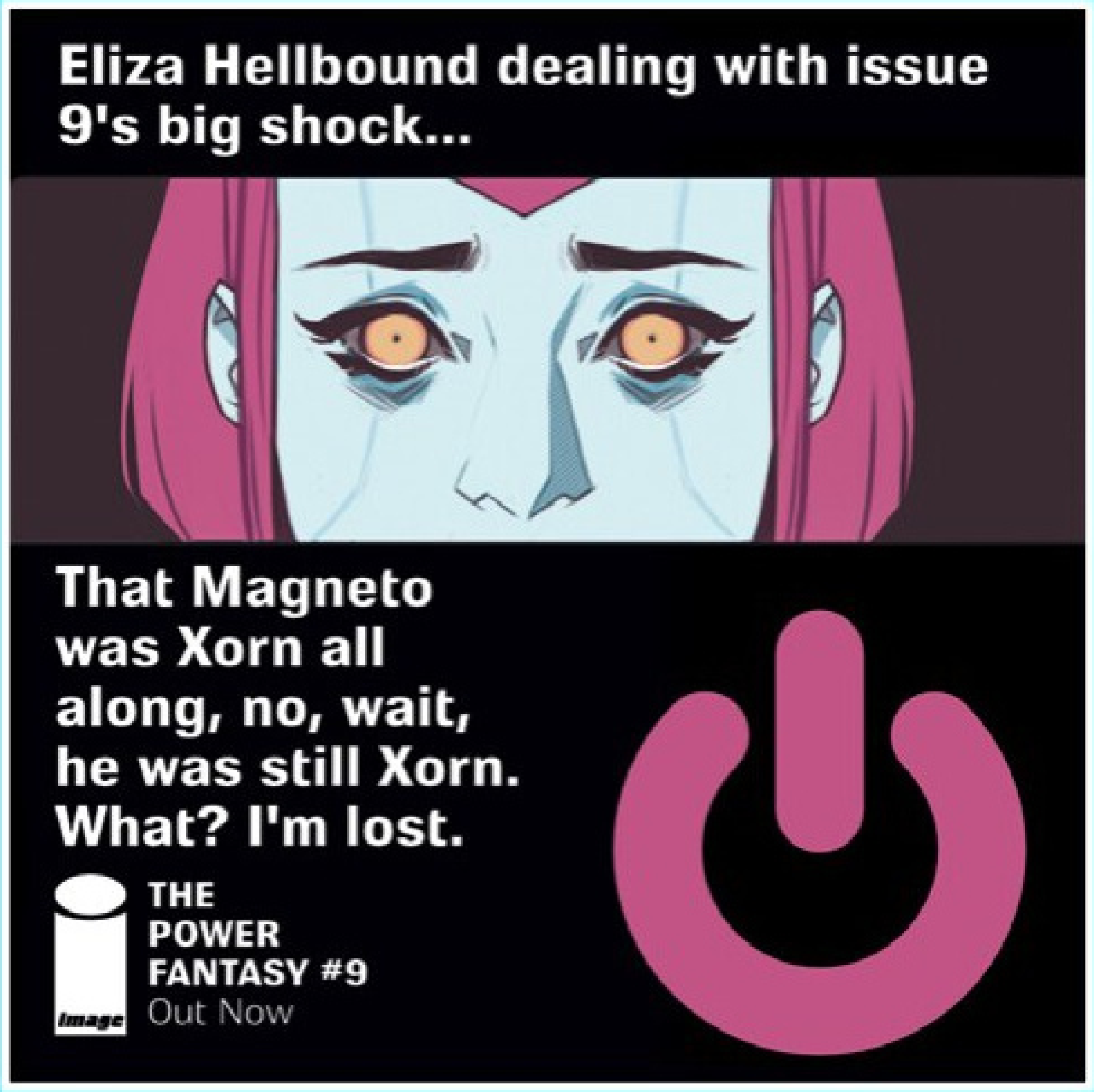
THE POWER FANTASY #9
Out Now



Eliza Hellbound dealing with issue 9's big shock...

Darth Vader is Luke's father, no way! Are you &%!$ing me!?

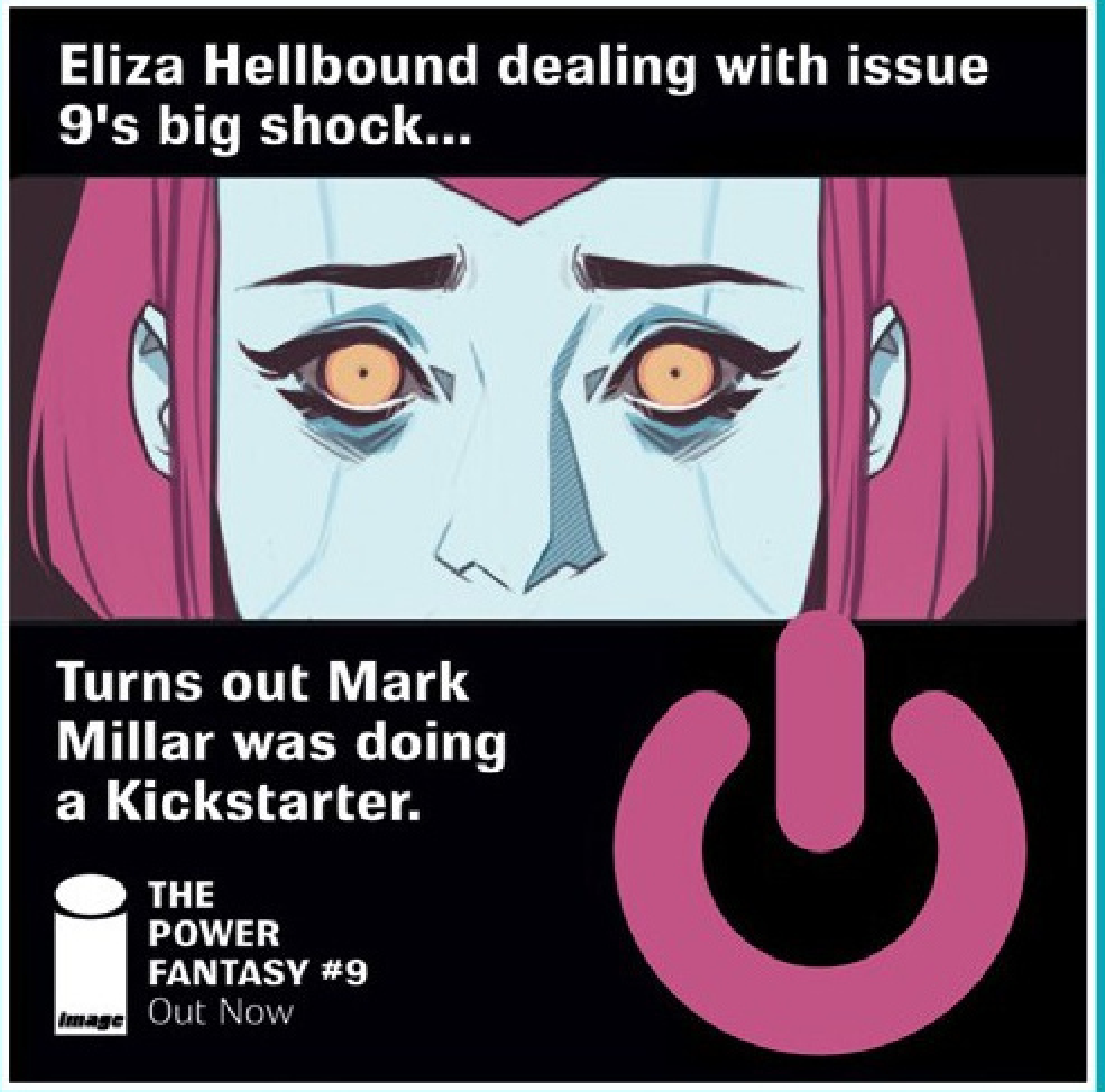
THE POWER FANTASY #9
Out Now



Eliza Hellbound dealing with issue 9's big shock...

That Magneto was Xorn all along, no, wait, he was still Xorn. What? I'm lost.

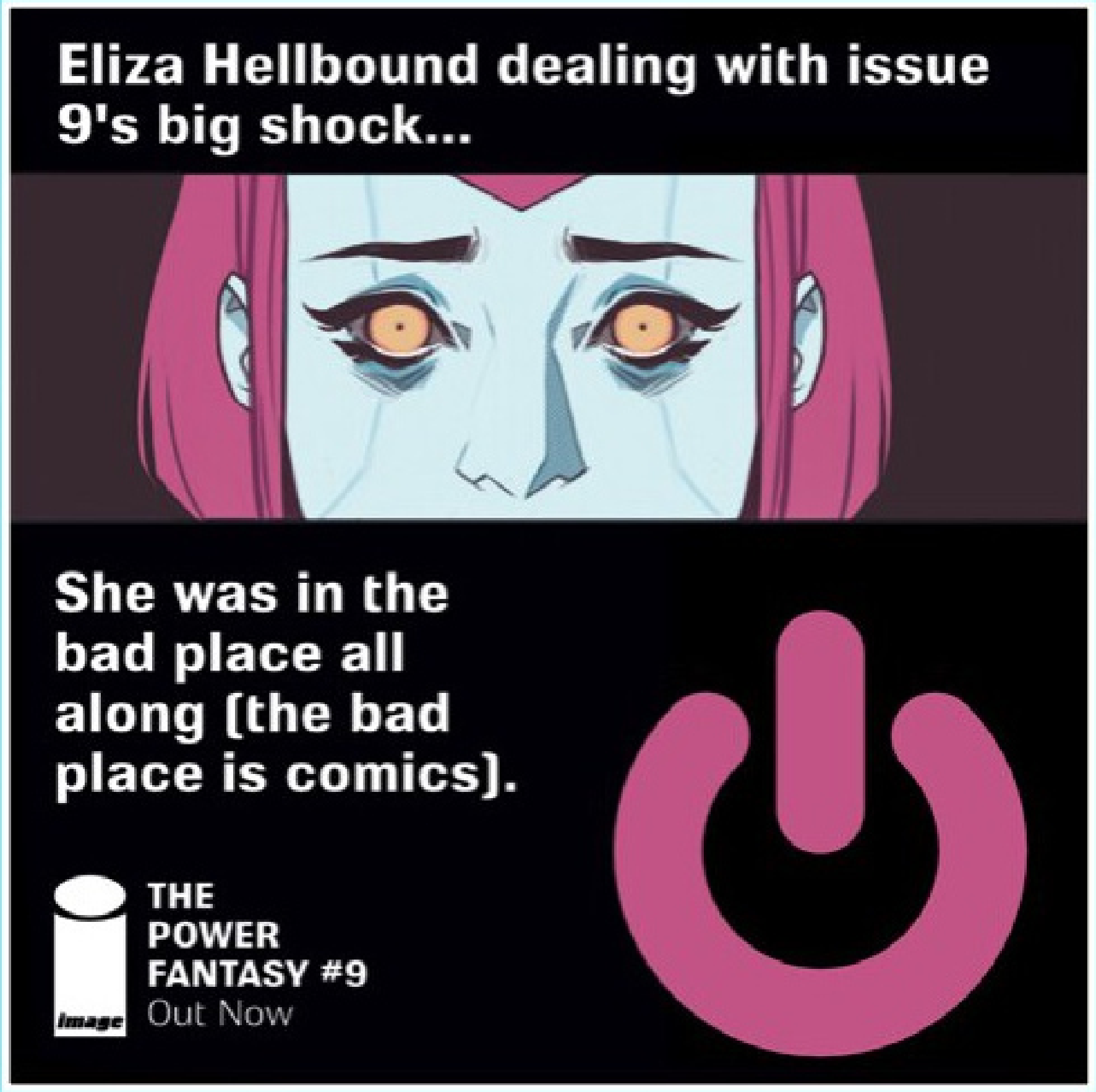
THE POWER FANTASY #9
Out Now



Eliza Hellbound dealing with issue 9's big shock...

Turns out Mark Millar was doing a Kickstarter.

THE POWER FANTASY #9
Out Now



Eliza Hellbound dealing with issue 9's big shock...

She was in the bad place all along [the bad place is comics].

THE POWER FANTASY #9
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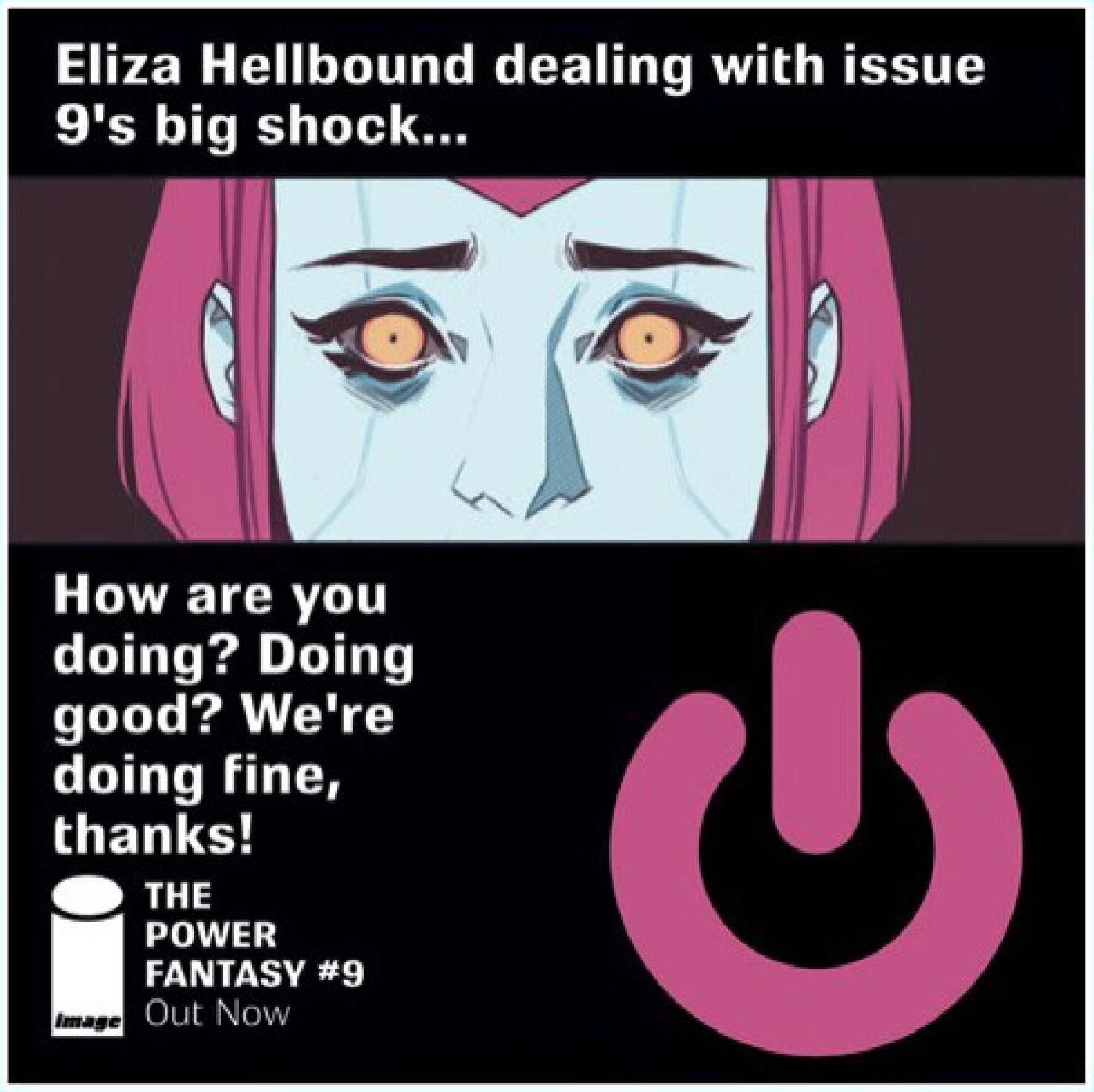
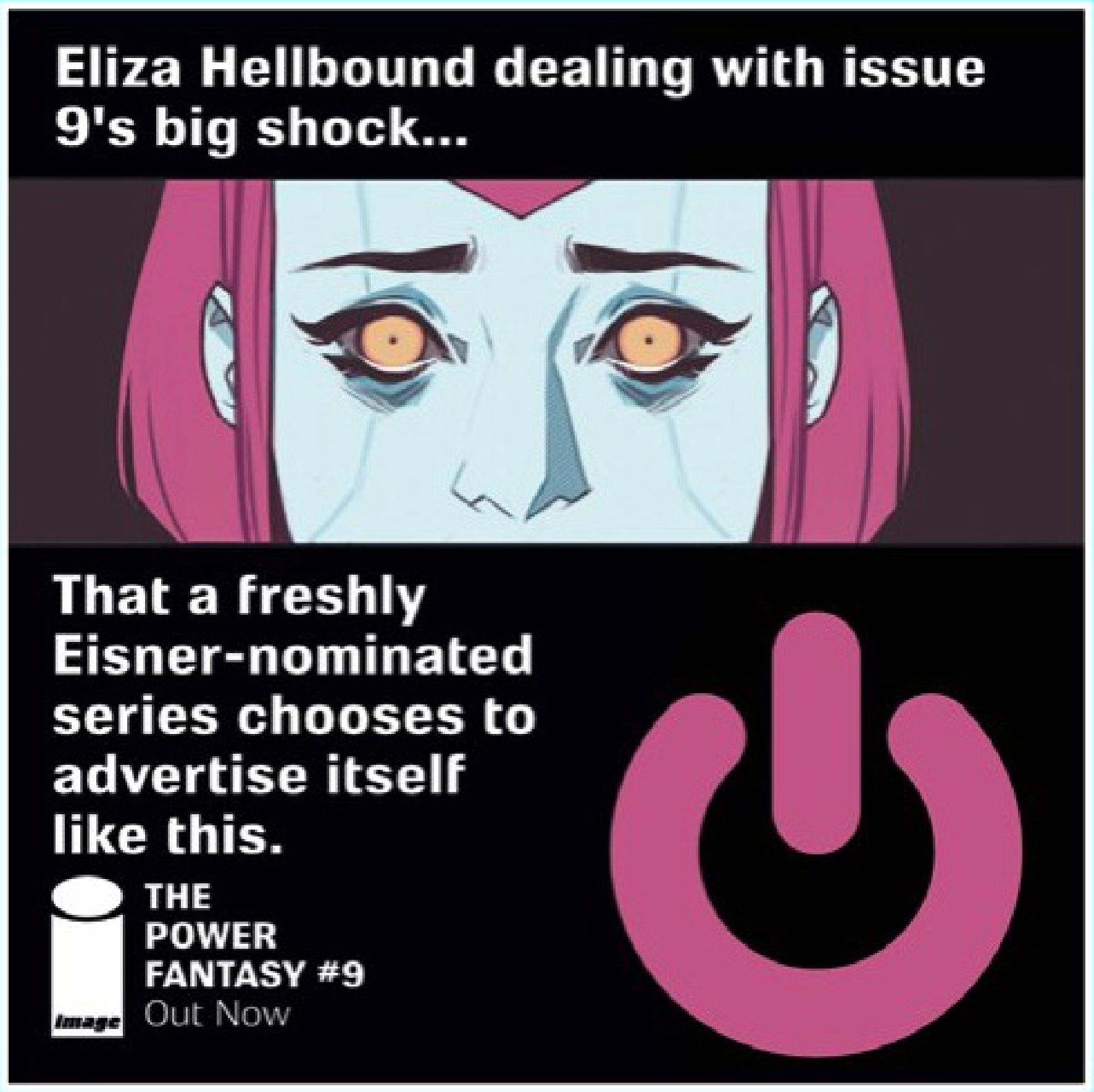


Eliza Hellbound dealing with issue 9's big shock...

How are you doing? Doing good? We're doing fine, thanks!

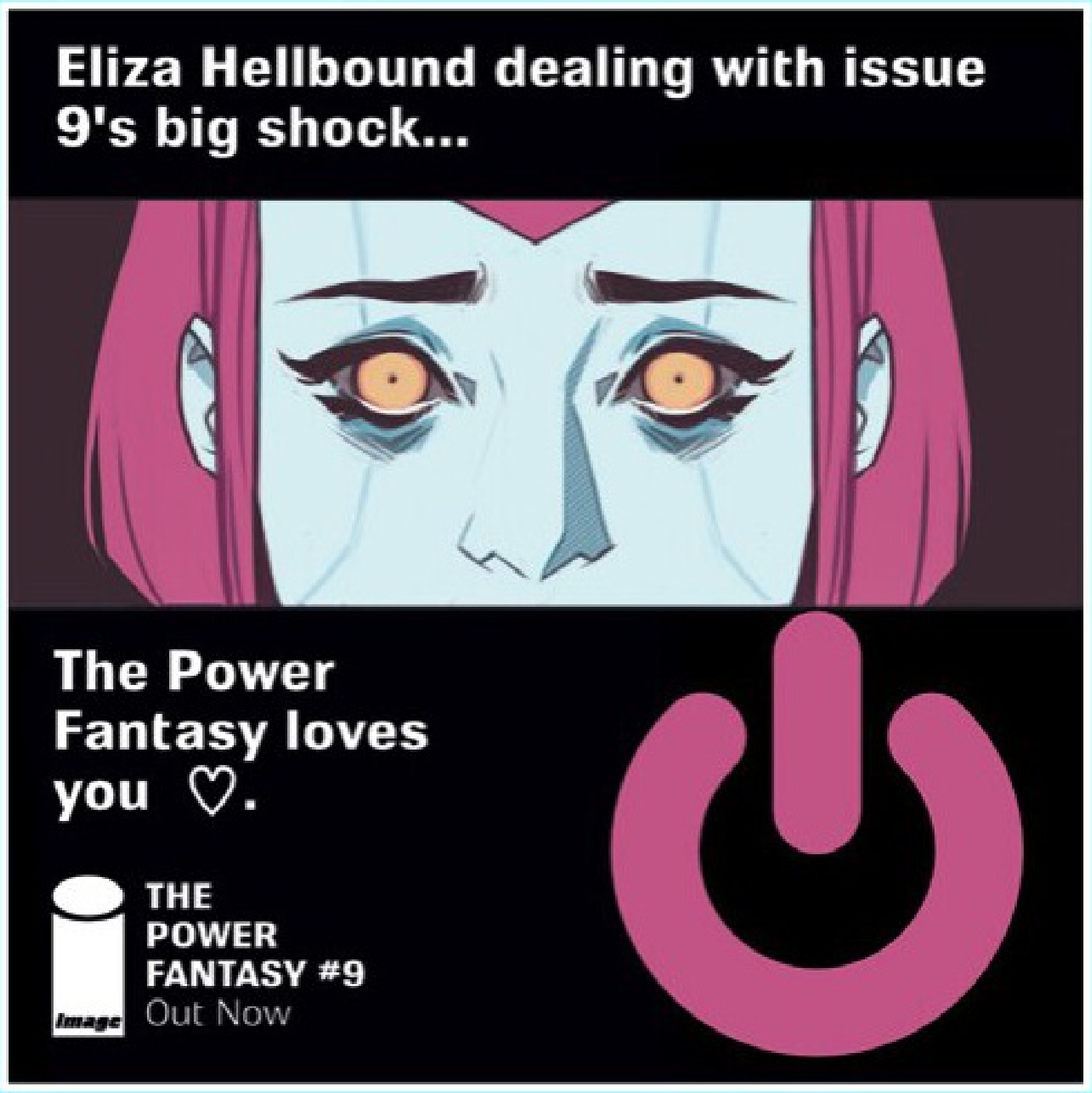
THE POWER FANTASY #9
Out Now



Eliza Hellbound dealing with issue 9's big shock...

That a freshly Eisner-nominated series chooses to advertise itself like this.

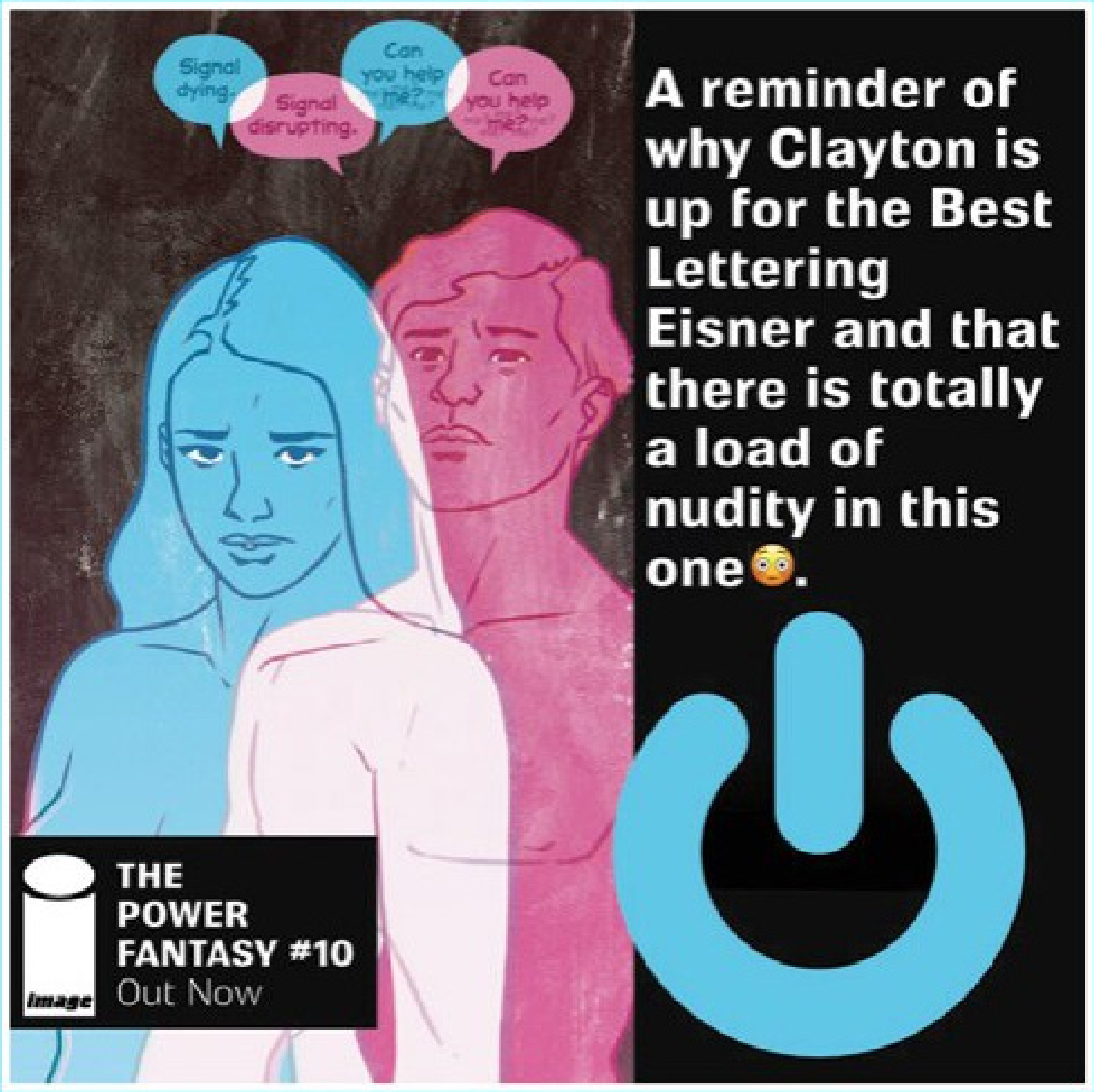
THE POWER FANTASY #9
Out Now



Eliza Hellbound dealing with issue 9's big shock...

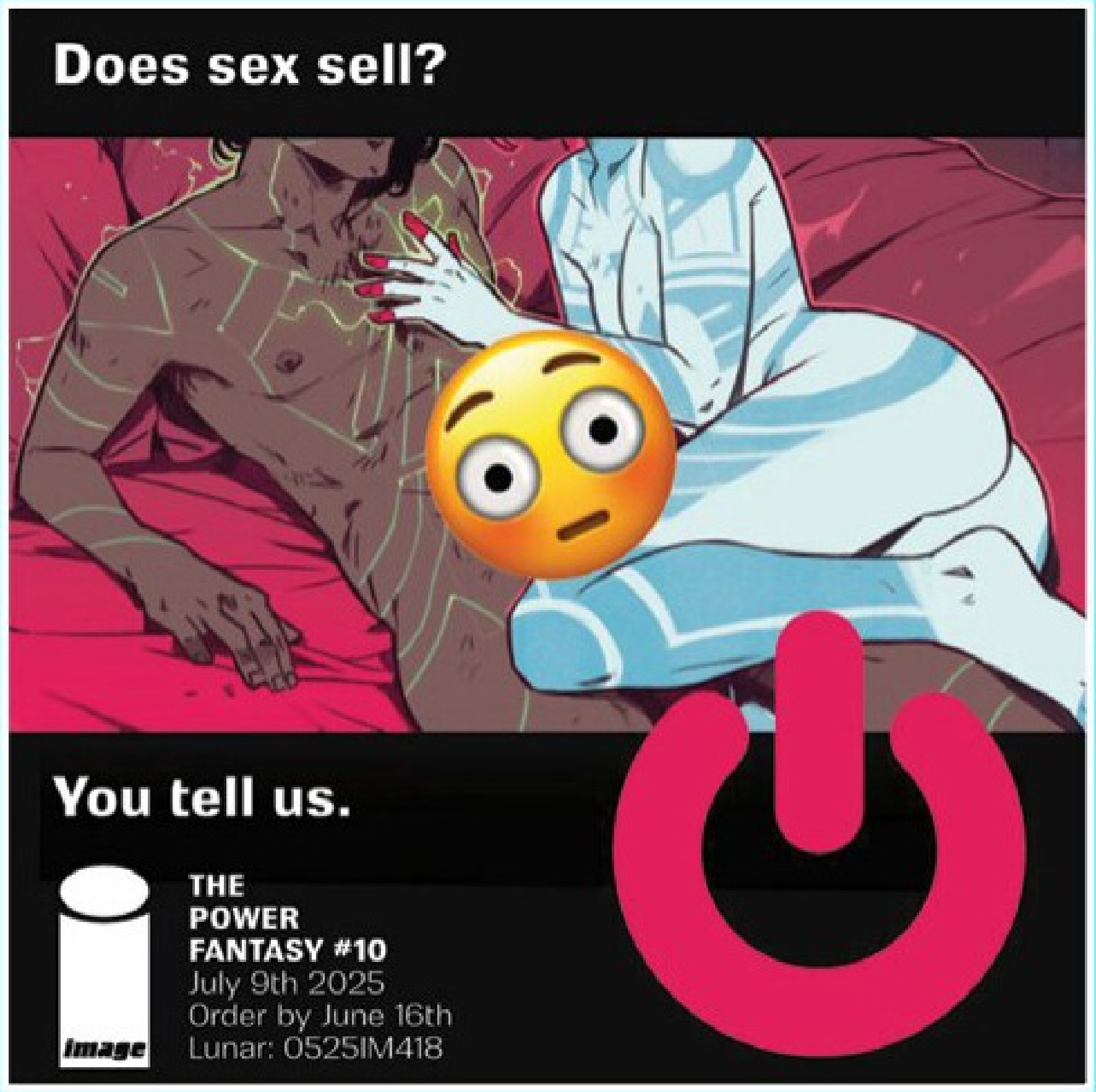
The Power Fantasy loves you ♡.

THE POWER FANTASY #9
Out Now


Signal dying.
Signal disrupting.
Can you help me?
Can you help me?

A reminder of why Clayton is up for the Best Lettering Eisner and that there is totally a load of nudity in this one😳.

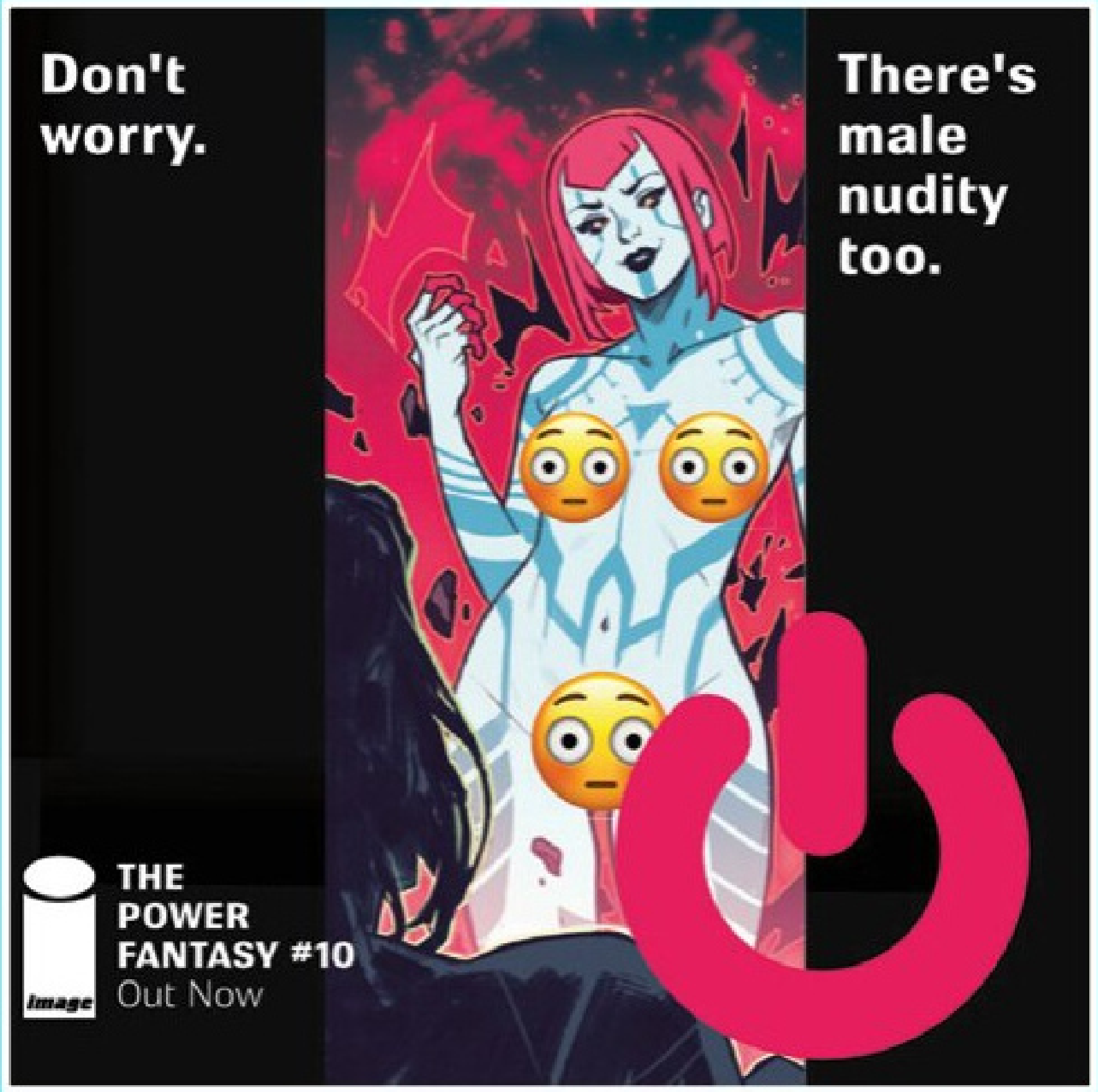
THE POWER FANTASY #10
Out Now



Does sex sell?

You tell us.

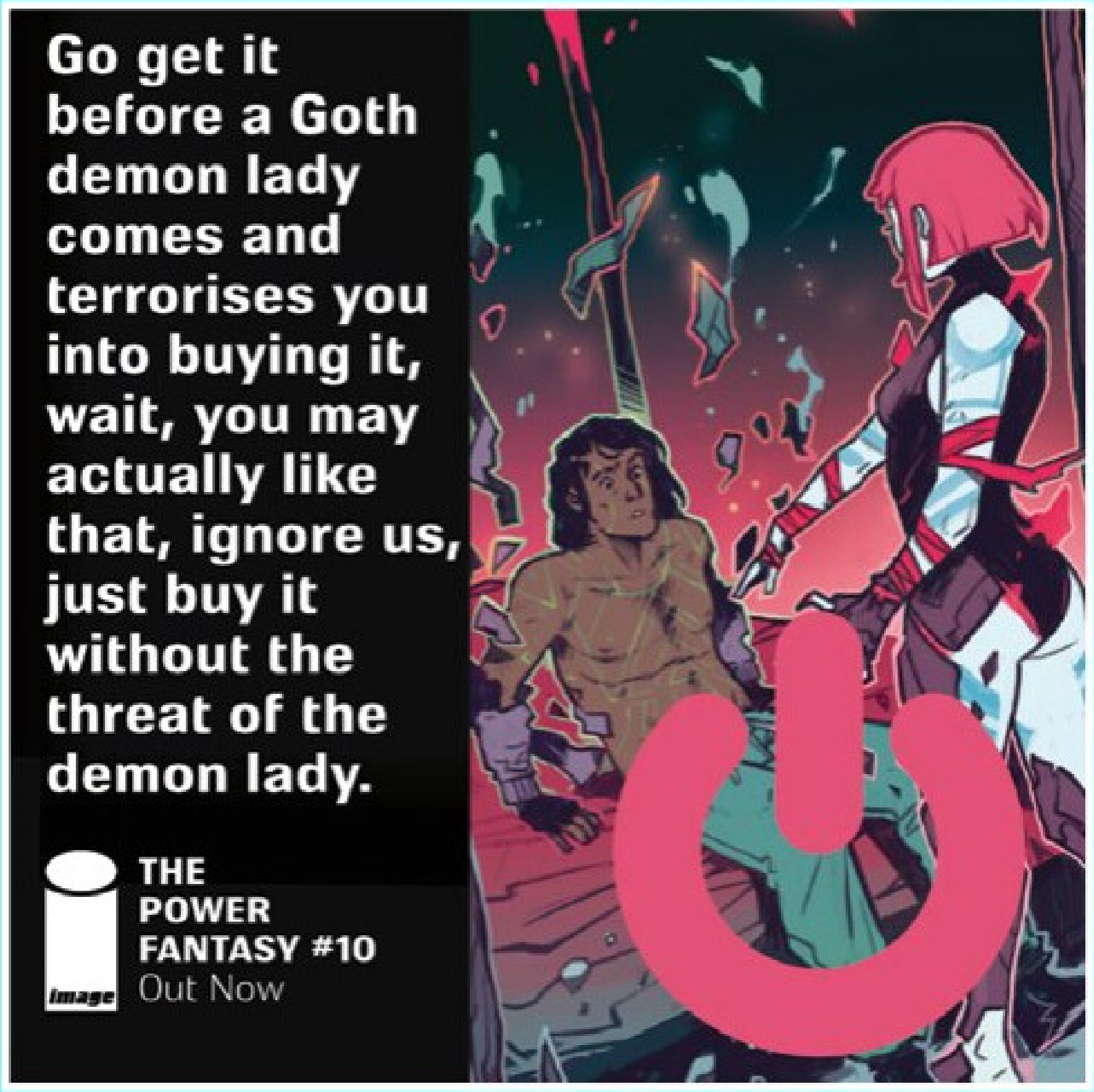
THE POWER FANTASY #10
July 9th 2025
Order by June 16th
Lunar: 0525IM418



Don't worry.

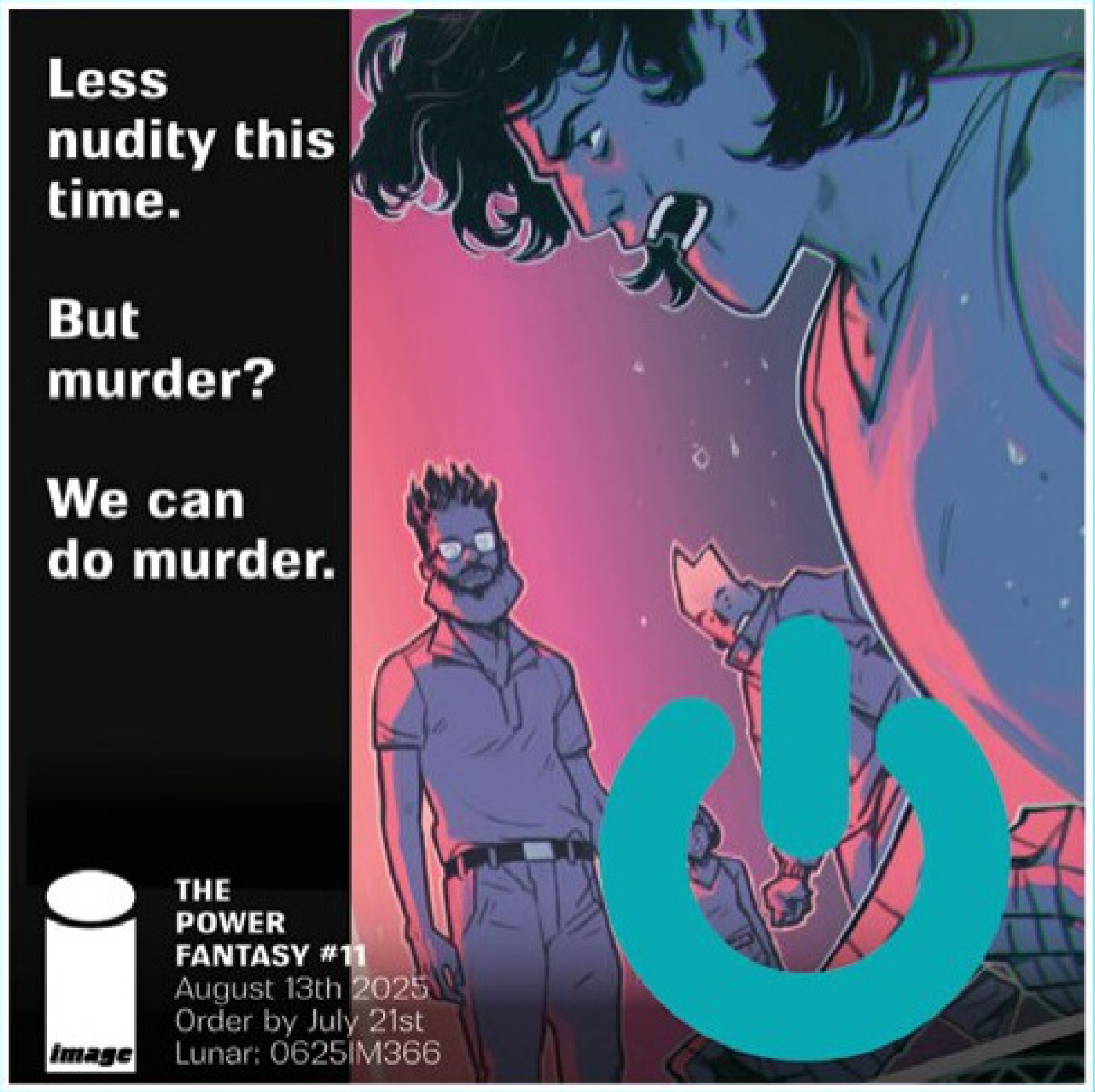
There's male nudity too.

THE POWER FANTASY #10
Out Now



Go get it before a Goth demon lady comes and terrorises you into buying it, wait, you may actually like that, ignore us, just buy it without the threat of the demon lady.

THE POWER FANTASY #10
Out Now

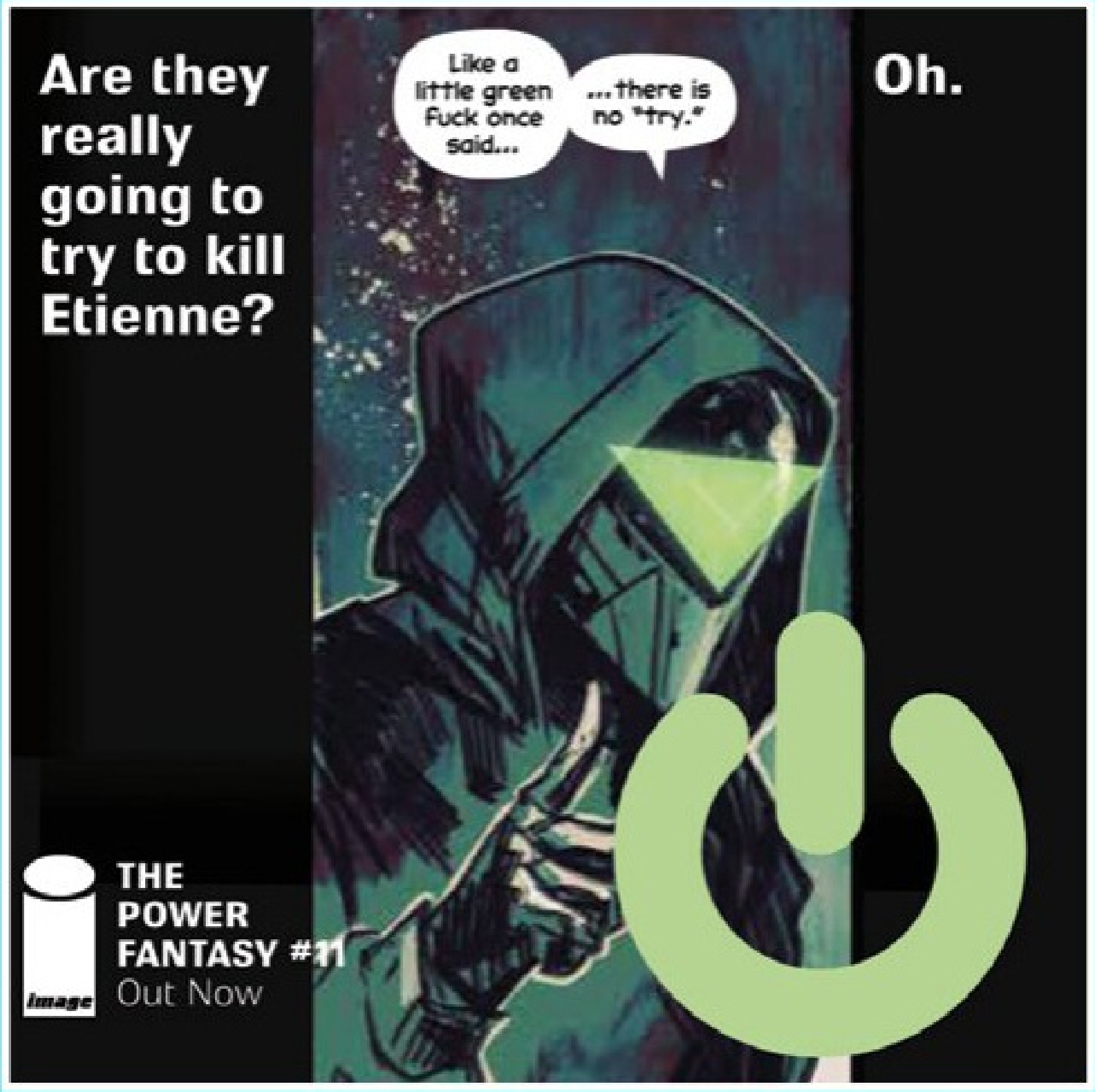


Less nudity this time.

But murder?

We can do murder.

THE POWER FANTASY #11
August 13th 2025
Order by July 21st
Lunar: 0625IM366


Like a little green Fuck once said...
...there is no "try."

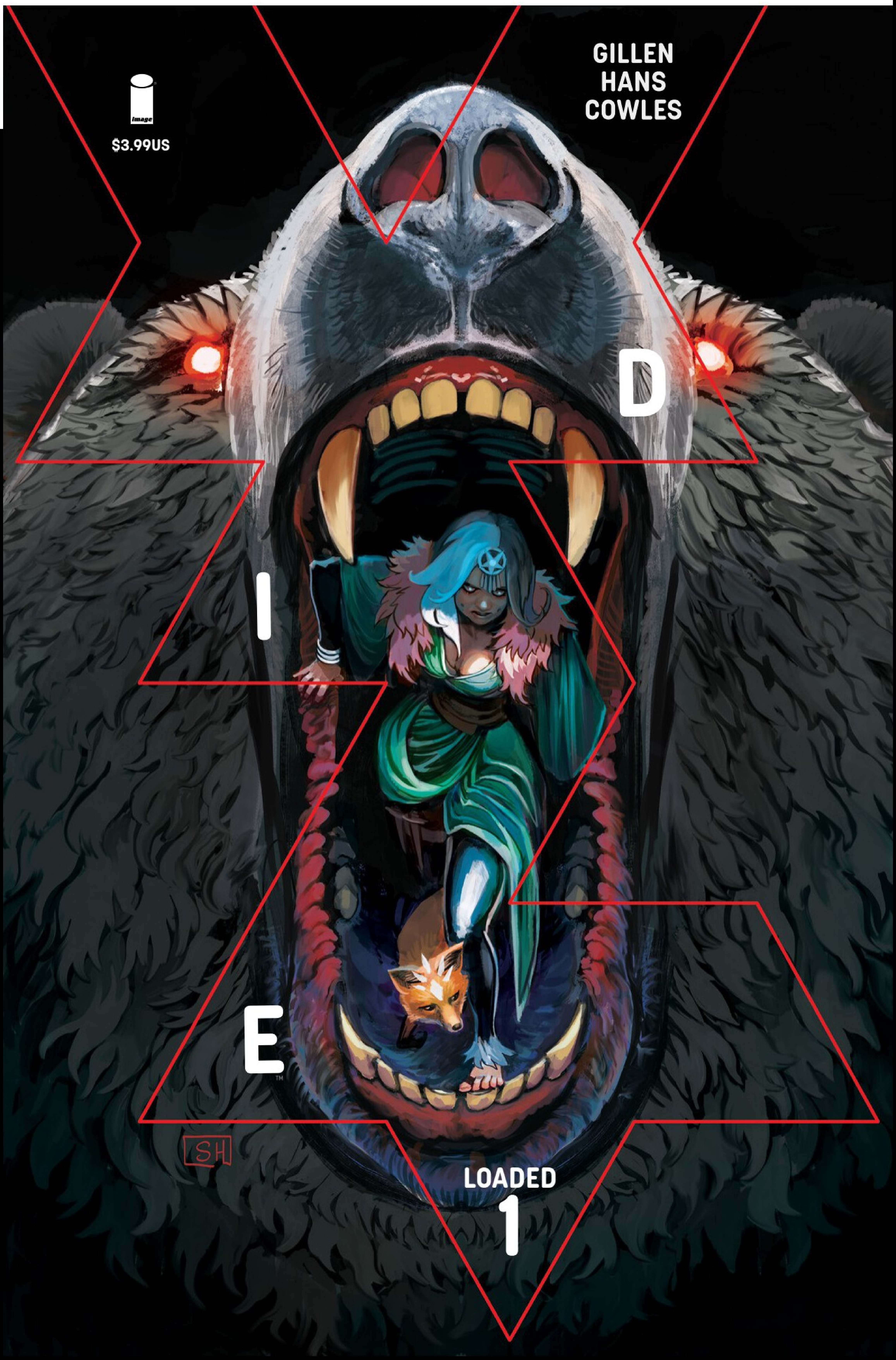
Are they really going to try to kill Etienne?

Oh.

THE POWER FANTASY #11
Out Now

DIE: LOADED

On sale November 12



DIE **returns for an epic new story of a dark fantasy adventure game gone horrifically right or wonderfully wrong. A year after their return from the hellish gameworld, the players gather for Chuck's wake. They've finished with the game. The game isn't finished with them.**

The three-time Hugo Award-nominated series from writer Kieron Gillen (*The Power Fantasy*) and Stephanie Hans (*DIE, We Called Them Giants*) is back in November. Get ready to roll initiative. Who's going to DIE this time?

WE CALLED THEM GIANTS

On sale now

WE CALLED THEM
GIANTS
KIERON GILLEN / STEPHANIE HANS / CLAYTON COWLES
"Masterfully captures the enduring power of kindness and friendship in a shattered world."
—Marjorie Liu

The first OGN from Kieron Gillen and Stephanie Hans, creators of *DIE*. A story about communication across a chasm at the end of the world.

FURTHER READING

Other books from
the creators of
The Power Fantasy

Drawn by Caspar Wijngaard

HOME SICK PILOTS
3 volumes

LIMBO

ALL AGAINST ALL

ANGELIC

SWAN SONGS

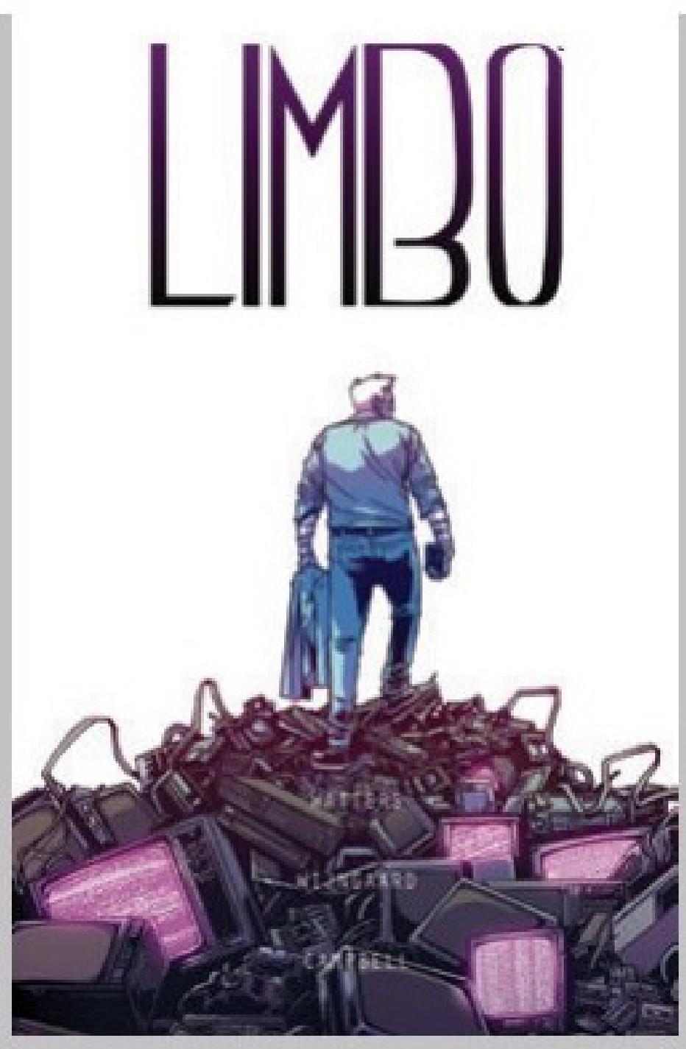
By Kieron Gillen and Caspar Wijngaard

PETER CANNON: WATCH
(Dynamite)

HOME SICK PILOTS
Vol. 1 TEENAGE HAUNTS
WATTERS WIJNGAARD BIDIKAR MULLER

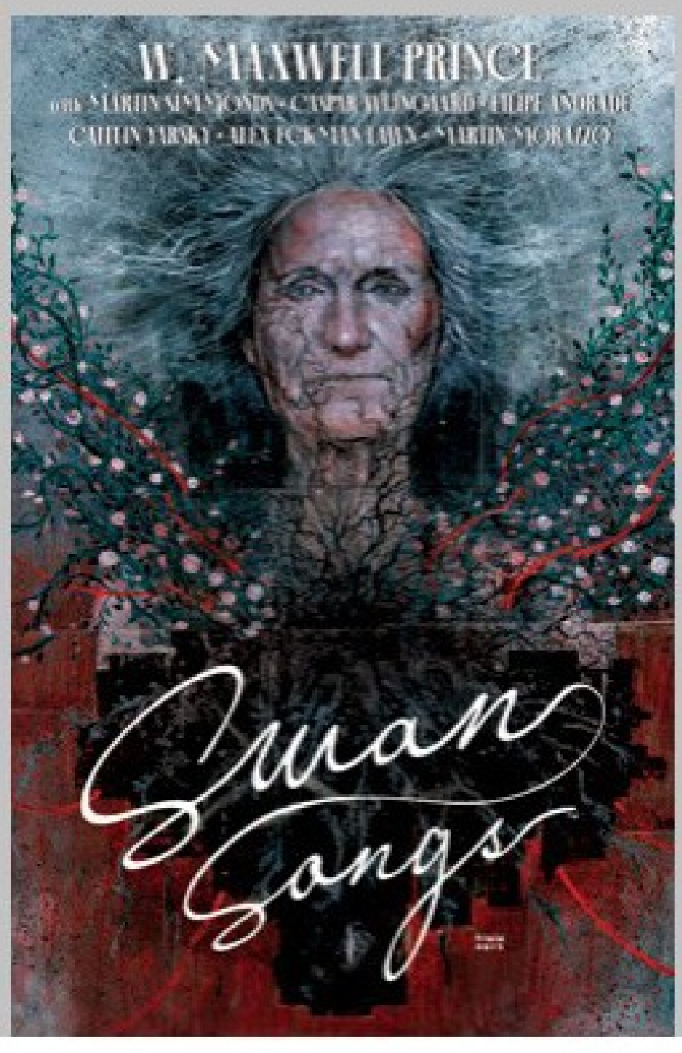
HOME SICK PILOTS
WATTERS WIJNGAARD BIDIKAR MULLER

HOME SICK PILOTS
WATTERS WIJNGAARD BIDIKAR MULLER



ALL AGAINST ALL

Angelic
Spurrier · Wijngaard
Book 1
HEIRS AND GRACES


W. MAXWELL PRINCE
Swan Songs

GILLEN | WIJNGAARD
DYNAMITE
PETER CANNON
THUNDERBOLT
WATCH

Written by Kieron Gillen

WE CALLED THEM GIANTS

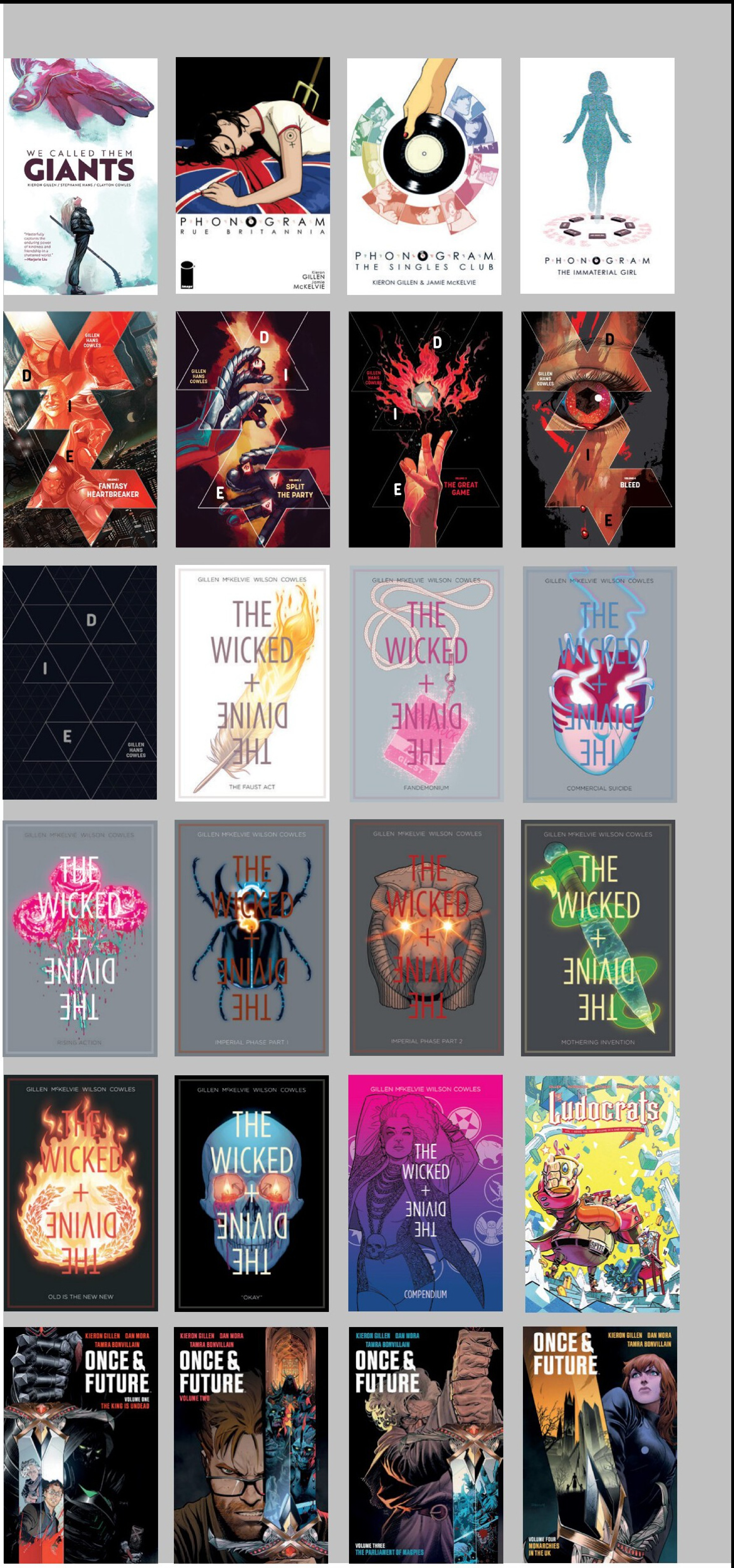
PHONOGRAM
3 volumes

DIE
4 volumes
Collected hardcover

THE WICKED + THE DIVINE
9 volumes
Compendium

THE LUDOCRATS

ONCE & FUTURE
5 volumes
[Boom]


WE CALLED THEM GIANTS
PHONOGRAM RUE BRITANNIA
PHONOGRAM THE SINGLES CLUB
KIERON GILLEN & JAMIE McKELVIE
PHONOGRAM THE IMMATERIAL GIRL
DIE FANTASY HEARTBREAKER
DIE SPLIT THE PARTY
DIE THE GREAT GAME
DIE BLEED
DIE
GILLEN McKELVIE WILSON COWLES
THE WICKED + THE DIVINE
THE FAUST ACT
FANDEMONIUM
COMMERCIAL SUICIDE
RISING ACTION
IMPERIAL PHASE PART 1
IMPERIAL PHASE PART 2
MOTHERING INVENTION
OLD IS THE NEW NEW
"OKAY"
COMPENDIUM
Ludocrats
KIERON GILLEN DAN MORA TAMRA BONVILLAIN
ONCE & FUTURE
VOLUME ONE THE KING IS UNDEAD
VOLUME TWO
VOLUME THREE THE PARLIAMENT OF MAGPIES
VOLUME FOUR MONARCHIES IN THE UK

CREATOR BIOS

Kieron Gillen is an award-winning writer who has co-created comics such as *The Wicked + The Divine, The Power Fantasy, We Called Them Giants, DIE, Once & Future* and more. He has worked extensively for Marvel on books like *Immortal X-Men, Journey Into Mystery, Young Avengers, Darth Vader, Eternals* and a disturbingly large number more. He is based in Bath, UK. He has no plans to take over the world.

Caspar Wijngaard is an award-winning comic artist from the UK who has worked on titles such as *Star Wars: Doctor Aphra* and *Batman: Detective Comics.* He is also the co-creator of the series *Home Sick Pilots, Limbo,* and *All Against All.* He has no plans to take over the world.

Clayton Cowles is an Eisner Award-winning and Ringo-nominated comic book letterer. Since graduating from the Kubert School in 2009, he has worked for every major publisher. He has worked with Kieron Gillen on *DIE, Eternals, Immortal X-Men, Journey Into Mystery, Phonogram, Star Wars, Three, We Called Them Giants, The Wicked + The Divine, Ludocrats,* and *Young Avengers.* He lives in upstate New York in a house with two cats, which is about all the world he can handle.

Rian Hughes is a graphic designer, illustrator, writer, typographer and sometime comic book artist who has worked for the British and American publishing, music, advertising and comic book industries. He has written and drawn comics for *2000AD* and *Batman: Black and White*, and designed logos for *James Bond, the X-Men, Superman,* and *The Avengers,* collected in the Eisner-nominated book *Logo a Gogo.* He has published two novels, *XX* and *The Black Locomotive*. He took over the world, but the paperwork is a nightmare.

To hear the team talk about the process of creating The Power Fantasy, *listen to our series of interviews on the podcast* Decompressed*. Find it online at decompressed.libsyn.com.*

Imagine six people of such power that the world would end if they came into conflict. Now imagine them never coming into conflict. Which is easier? The critically acclaimed series continues to pull blocks from the Jenga tower of total annihilation.

Come dance to the ticking of the doomsday clock with Kieron Gillen *(The Wicked + The Divine, DIE)* **and Caspar Wijngaard** *(Home Sick Pilots, All Against All)* **in this Eisner Award-nominated epic.**

Collects *The Power Fantasy* #6-11.

"Goes roaring through the doors that Alan Moore and Grant Morrison opened back in the '80s, bringing an immediate sense of the wonder and terror of superpowers existing in our fractured world."
—Patton Oswalt

"*The Power Fantasy* continues to prove that there's nothing else quite like it on the shelves."
—Spencer Perry (*Comicbook.com*)

"A cool fusion of existential dread and celestial hope."
—Tini Howard (*Catwoman, Excalibur*)

"A beautiful technicolor nightmare of trying to hold a straight razor to God's throat."
—Marguerite Bennett (*Switchblade, Animosity, M.O.M.: Mother of Madness*)

Superheroes,
Supervillains,
Action/Adventure
Rated **M** (Mature)

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